

# The Catholic Faith




W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS

**T**HIS Manual represents an endeavour to answer two questions :  
(1) What is the Church of England ?  
(2) What does the Church of England teach ? The answers to these questions are found, first, in the Prayer Book and Articles considered in their plain and obvious meaning. An attempt is then made to indicate the fundamental principles of the Church of England, to show how those principles are expressed in the formularies of doctrine and worship, and to point out what the principles imply and involve in the lives of those who are bound by them.

In issuing a new edition of the manual the publishers have taken the opportunity to produce it in an improved format, and at the same time to undertake a careful revision of the text. Since it was first published the book has passed through numerous editions, totalling 63,000 copies in all.







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# The Catholic Faith

A MANUAL OF INSTRUCTION FOR  
MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*by*

W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D.D.

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

WHILE an apologetic preface is always unnecessary, a few words explanatory of the writer's aim may rightly be allowed.

This Manual represents an endeavour to answer two questions : (1) What is the Church of England ? (2) What does the Church of England teach ? The answers to these questions are found, first, in the Prayer Book and Articles considered in their plain and obvious meaning. An attempt is then made to indicate the fundamental principles of the Church of England, to show how those principles are expressed in the formularies of doctrine and worship, and to point out what the principles imply and involve in the life of those who are bound by them. It is also shown that the Prayer Book and Articles need consideration in the light of their origin and compilation, and in view of the circumstances which gave birth to their present form. The Church of England formularies are thus seen to be the direct outcome of great movements of thought and life in the English nation.

The treatment of the various subjects is necessarily brief and incomplete, but an attempt has been made at least to touch upon all essential matters.

The substance of the book represents teaching given in the course of parochial work, in Confirmation Classes and Sermons together with some theological lectures to missionary candidates and congregations in various localities. All possible care has been taken to verify the statements made, but in a book of this kind it is obviously necessary to deal with results rather than with processes. As the book represents the reading and study of several years it is impossible to acknowledge indebtedness in detail, but special mention must be made of help and suggestion derived from several Manuals of Doctrine and other similar books. After working over the ground myself I naturally consulted other works, and I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness for suggestions even when I could not agree with particular interpretations. I refer especially to *The Church Catechism Explained*, by Rev. A. W. Robinson ; *Confirmation Lectures*, by Canon Barnes Lawrence ; *The Prayer Book and the Christian Life*, by Archdeacon Tiffany ; and *The Church Catechism*, by Canon Stowell. The summary of Church History in Part II. is intended to be a brief statement of the link of connexion of the Church of England with the Church of Apostolic days, and an



explanation of how she has come to be what she is. It is mainly a bare narration of facts based on several well known works. Litton's great work, *An Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, has been referred to and used throughout. For twenty years past that book has been a constant and treasured companion.

While I am of course responsible for the general treatment and conclusions of the Chapter on the Ornaments Rubric in Part III., I am greatly indebted to the criticisms of a friend who does not wish his name mentioned, but whose knowledge of this thorny subject is thorough and reliable.

I submitted to several friends the first draft of the synopsis of this work, in order to obtain the benefit of their criticisms. Among these I must mention Canon E. A. Stuart and Canon R. C. Joynt, of whose great pastoral experience I naturally wished to avail myself for the greater usefulness of the book. To Canon Barnes Lawrence I am particularly grateful for his trouble in reading through the entire manuscript and for giving me the benefit of his sound judgment and valued criticisms.

It remains to express the hope and prayer that this endeavour to show what it means to be an English Churchman may be blessed of God to the confirmation of members of the Anglican Church in "the faith once delivered to the Saints" as it now stands embodied in the Word of God and enshrined in the Prayer Book and Articles of the Church of England.

W. H. G. T.

## NOTE TO REVISED EDITION, 1952

IN issuing a new edition of this popular handbook, the publishers have taken the opportunity to produce it in an improved format, and at the same time to undertake a careful revision of the text. The work of revision was entrusted to a group of three scholars, each of whom made himself responsible for one of the main Parts into which the book is divided, as follows :

The Rev. Alan M. Stibbs, M.A. (Part I)

The Rev. G. W. Bromiley, Ph.D., D.Litt. (Part II)

The Rev. J. Stafford Wright, M.A. (Part III)

The publishers gratefully acknowledge the assistance which has thus been given in the preparing of this revised edition. At the same time they wish to make clear that no attempt has been made to re-write the book or modify its teaching. The revision has been confined to making alterations and additions to the text in the interests of accuracy and clarity. Occasional footnotes have been added to amplify particular statements, and the Book List at the end has been brought up to date. In substance the work remains unaltered.

Since it was first issued the book has passed through numerous editions, totalling 63,000 copies in all. It is believed that in this new form it will continue to serve as a clear and concise guide to the faith, history, worship and order of the Church of England.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.





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## INTRODUCTION

ST. PETER, when writing to the Christians of his day, urged them to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh the reason of the hope that is in them". Three important lessons are clearly taught us in this Apostolic counsel. (1) The Christians possessed a "hope," that is, they enjoyed the experience of being Christians. (2) They also had "a reason" for this hope; they knew how and why it was they had this experience. (3) They were urged to "be ready" to give expression to this reason whenever required.

In the present day these three truths are equally necessary in the case of all "who profess and call themselves Christians." It is of the utmost importance first of all that we are Christians, that we are in possession of a genuine spiritual life and experience; then it is very important to know why we are Christians; and it is by no means least important that we should be prepared to justify our position before others.

To-day, however, there is an additional truth for consideration besides the foregoing; that is, the necessity of knowing what it means to be a Christian in association with the Church of England, to know what is involved in belonging to that body of Christians which is called by this title, and to be able to state and justify our position whenever required to do so.

This is the purpose of the present work, which is addressed to members of the Church of England, more particularly the younger members, in the hope that they will find in it a sufficient statement of what it means to be members of that company of Christian people which for centuries has been known by the title of the Church of England. To be a Christian is good, to know why we are Christians is still better, while to give to others a reason for our position is best of all, because we thereby become witnesses to our Master and fulfil His purpose concerning us (Acts i. 8).

As we proceed we shall be able to see how necessary and important it is to have a clear conception of what Christianity and Church membership mean. Spiritual experience must come first, then follows the intellectual expression of that experience, and in view of inevitable varieties of thought and opinion it is essential for us to have clear views of what is implied in our allegiance to Christ and in our adhesion to the body of His followers.



A few words are necessary as to the plan and method of this book. It follows the order of our Prayer Book as it is used by us from our earliest years. Starting from the realization of our individual consciousness and responsibility as taught by the Church Catechism, the order of the Prayer Book in the instruction and development of the Christian life is followed, and the Prayer Book is thus regarded, not only as a handbook of worship, but also as a rule or method of spiritual life.

- Part 1. Deals with the relation of the individual Christian to God according to the Prayer Book, and how that relation is formed and maintained.
- Part 2. Deals with the relation of the individual Churchman to his fellow Churchmen in regard to doctrine, worship, and practice.
- Part 3. Deals with the relation of the individual Churchman to some important questions of the day.

PART I  
THE CATHOLIC FAITH AND  
INDIVIDUAL LIFE



## CHAPTER I

### THE STARTING POINT

THE opening question in the Church Catechism seems at first sight very unnecessary. "What is your name?" In reality it is the key to all that follows in the use of the Prayer Book. "Your name" at once calls attention to the simple yet solemn fact of an individual life, a life entirely distinct from every other life, an experience essentially separate from all other experiences; the fact that "I am I" and no one else, that "I am I," and in many ways entirely different from everyone else. This awakening of personal consciousness is the real meaning of the apparently unnecessary but vital question, "What is your name?" What a seriousness it gives to life; with what solemnity it invests our daily experiences! "I am myself," and no one else can be what I can be to myself, to others, to God.

I. The answer to this first question not only implies an individual consciousness; it goes further and calls attention to the "name" itself, which is, of course, the *Christian* name, and thereby we are at once directed to the **Christian consciousness**, for the Christian name alone is given in the answer to the question. Our very name is therefore associated with our introduction to the privileges and opportunities of the Christian religion.

The first question at once leads to another, "Who gave you that name?" and if the first answer was intended to help us to realize our individual and Christian consciousness, the second is meant to remind us of the normal and true starting point of our Christian position. Let us look at the answer carefully.

"My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

We see in this a reference to three things—

- (a) Particular persons—"My Godfathers and Godmothers."
- (b) A definite time—"In my Baptism."
- (c) A special act—"Wherein I was made."

We are thus reminded of the special and definite relations in which we find ourselves from our earliest days.

- (a) A relation to home—"My Godfathers and Godmothers."
- (b) A relation to the Church—"In my Baptism."

(c) A relation to God—"A member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

So that, although as we have just seen, "I am I" and quite distinct from others; I am not wholly separate from others, but have a definite relation to them in various ways. This is how the individual consciousness is balanced by our social relations, reminding us that we are not solitary individuals only, but also members of a social and spiritual community.

2. **The reference to Godparents** properly includes a reference to our own parents, who chose the Godparents to interest themselves in our spiritual welfare. Thus, at the outset, as indeed all through the Prayer Book, there is a silent but clear and real assumption that those who use the ordinances of the Christian Church value them and have a personal interest in them. The requirement of Godparents, instead of our parents being regarded as sufficient, is just the wise and additional security which our Church takes for the proper instruction and care of little children. And the fact that Godparents brought us in our unconscious infancy to Church to be baptized is intended to suggest that they realized (at any rate they were supposed by the Church to realize) their responsibility to us as helpless babes, and that they had a definite interest in Christian privileges, and desired us to partake of the same. Thus our life was, as it were, bound up with theirs and theirs with ours, and in this twofold relation is the earthly guarantee of our true life and progress.

3. **The reference to Baptism** is, of course, to that ordinance of Christianity of which we read so much in the New Testament, and it is necessary for us to understand now at the commencement (what we shall have to consider more fully later on) the real meaning of that holy ordinance. If we would arrive at a true estimate of Baptism we must always consider it primarily from *God's* standpoint rather than from the standpoint of our attitude to Him. In the New Testament people are never said to baptize themselves, they are always baptized by someone else. Further, the fact that they are baptized in God's Name shows that in the act of baptizing the minister really represents God, and that Baptism expresses first and foremost an *act of God* and not of the Church or of the individual.

What is this act of God and what does it mean? Baptisms or washings in the Old Testament always symbolized purification and dedication. The person or thing was regarded as thereby separated from ordinary use and purified for the purpose of being dedicated to God. This Old Testament idea of Baptism was perfectly familiar to the Jews of our Lord's day, and is evidently taken for granted in the New Testament instruction on Christian Baptism. The appli-



cation of water is an act symbolic and expressive of two things : (1) God's separation and designation of us for Himself. " Baptizing them *into* the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost " (Matt. xxviii. 19) : that is, baptized with the view to our becoming united to God in all the fullness of the meaning of that Name by which He is revealed. (2) In order to the realization of this, baptism also means God's separation and designation of us " unto " and for the purpose of the remission of sins (Acts ii. 38) as the great pre-requisite of union with God. When therefore our Godparents brought us to be baptized, the real meaning was that we were brought for the purpose of our being separated from all that is sinful and designated for God's fellowship by means of the pardon of our sins, and all the blessings which are ours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. **But how are we to understand the words, " Wherein I was made ? "** They do not mean that regardless of all else the application of the water of Baptism by itself conveys these special gifts. This is certainly not the teaching of the New Testament or of the Prayer Book, on Baptism.

(a) The words, " Wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven " presuppose and take for granted the whole baptismal service which preceded the actual ordinance, and they also take for granted the sincerity of the Godparents in their coming, and in their prayers and promises during the service.

(b) These words must also be read in the light of the full, clear instruction on the Sacraments given at the end of the Catechism—

" What is required of persons to be baptized ? "

" Repentance, whereby they forsake sin ; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament."

" Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them ? "

" Because they promise them both by their sureties ; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

It is clear then that the Baptismal Service is not complete in itself, but looks forward to the time of repentance and faith, which are obviously impossible in infancy.

(c) The words are to be understood in the light of the New Testament teaching on Baptism, which is always expressed as " unto," that is, " with a view to," " for the purpose of," spiritual blessing, and is therefore not by itself and alone the act of conveyance of that blessing. Indeed the Baptism is clearly to be distinguished from it, as being the Divine assurance and pledge that such blessing shall come to the one who fulfils the proper requirements.

(d) Above all, the words are to be interpreted in the light of the great Scriptural principle of a covenant between God and man, by

which is meant that all God's blessings are conditional for reception and full enjoyment on certain requirements being fulfilled. The ordinances of God are never unconditional and never work by and of themselves, but are always conditioned on right and worthy reception, as Article XXV of the Church of England carefully and clearly states: "In such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation." And this worthy reception in the case of infants can only be seen and proved in the subsequent life when the meaning of the ordinance and of Christianity generally is understood in the mind and welcomed in the heart. The word "wherein" is to be noted. It clearly means more than the act of Baptism (like St. Paul's "wherein," Col. ii. 12). It is to be understood as meaning "in connexion with which." And though the word "hereby" is found in one of the answers of the Catechism, we ought not to understand it as referring to the act of Baptism alone, apart from what precedes and follows the actual administration.

To be "made" indicates a prior state or experience before being thus "made." This, of course, refers to the solemn fact and awful results of sin in the world. Man was created good and in fellowship with God. Sin changed man's nature into evil and destroyed this fellowship. He was condemned, cast out of Paradise, lost God's image, and forfeited happiness and glory. From that time "all have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). To raise us from this low estate is the purpose and work of the Christian Gospel, and in Christ sinful man is to be restored by forgiveness and grace to even more than the former fellowship with God. Of this covenant of grace, by which all is accomplished, Baptism is the sign and seal, the pledge and promise, and hence the words "wherein I was made" refer both to the sad past through human sin and the glorious present and future through Divine grace.

To sum up: we must consider carefully what is meant by this starting point of the Christian life. It means that in the earliest days of our life, when we were unconscious of even life itself, we were surrounded by the Divine blessing, and by the influence of parental and spiritual love, and then brought to the house of God, there to be marked and designated for God's possession and use. This possession was to be realized by means of the forgiveness of sins and spiritual union through Christ. This act of loving dedication on the part of our parents and Godparents, and the corresponding act of consecration by the minister in God's Name, and on God's behalf, sealed us as belonging to God, pledged us to be His for ever as included in the great covenant blessings of the grace of God, which were to be made ours in spiritual reality as reason dawned and responsibility was gradually understood and accepted. Into

this position of privilege, opportunity and responsibility we were thus introduced, and in it we now stand and abide as we yield ourselves in heart and soul to appropriate and experience the blessings in our individual life. This is our standing ground and our starting point, and from it we shall proceed to see and enter into the full meaning of what Christianity is, and what it is to be a member of the Church of England.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIVILEGES

WE are now to consider the special blessings associated with our entrance into the covenant of grace and involved in the whole of our Christian life. Let us notice carefully how our Church emphasizes, first and foremost, God's part in this covenant, by calling our attention to His gifts and blessings before dwelling on our attitude and duties. The whole Bible is summed up in the well-known verse of the Psalms, "Thou preventest (that is, precedest) him with the blessings of goodness," (Ps. xxi. 3). God in love anticipates our attitude and action by His own attitude and action of grace towards us in offering for our acceptance and pledging to our faith His divine gifts of grace in Christ. It is the peculiar glory of the Church of England, thus following Scripture, that we are reminded first of all of what God is and will be to us before anything whatever is said about our relation and duty to Him. Let us look at these blessings carefully and in detail. They are three in number—

- (1) "A member of Christ."
- (2) "The child of God."
- (3) "An inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

I. "A member of Christ." That is, united to Christ (*membrum*, a part or portion). This implies that without the gospel of Divine grace we are not "members" of Christ but separated from Him. Herein is seen and taught the power of sin. It separates us from God. Just as an accident dislocates a member of the body and prevents the blood from flowing freely to every part, so sin has interrupted the life-giving movement of God in grace towards us men. Our first and chief need therefore is the forgiveness of sins by which we are restored once more to union with God, so that the forgiveness of sins is the first blessing included in the phrase, "a member of Christ" (Acts ii. 38, and xiii. 38).

But it also means the gift of life, spiritual life, God's own life which can now be manifested in our souls because the connexion has been restored and the dislocation set right. This is the meaning of the new birth (John iii. 3). God's own life is bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit, and continually through the new Testament we read of eternal life as God's present gift in Christ (John iii. 36 ; v. 24 ; vi. 47). Forgiveness and life are thus both included in the blessing of being "a member of Christ," and this covers the past and provides for the present needs of our life.

2. **"The child of God."** When the believer realizes that he is indeed a member of Christ, with the blessings of forgiveness and life in personal experience, a natural question at once arises. How may I remain what and where I am and not slip back into sinful ways? The answer is found in this second gift of God. "The child of God." If I am God's child I can be sure of my heavenly Father's presence, power and protection, and my evil heart which would lead me astray can be kept from evil by His fatherly love and care. In one sense all men are God's children by their creation in the Divine image, but in a very special sense, and indeed in the only full sense, Christians are God's children, and may rely on His presence and grace at all times (John i. 12 ; 2 Cor. vi. 18 ; Gal. iii. 26 ; Eph. iii. 14-16). This is our great encouragement to live aright, the assurance of God's fatherly protection and blessing. It should be noticed that we have here the definite article "*the* child of God" in order that we may appropriate with joy and comfort the assurance of God's individual love and care. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children : how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke xi. 13). This is the second of God's great blessings, and it covers the whole of our present needs.

3. **"An inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."** Even when we are conscious of the two former blessings our hearts may still ask a question about the future. If, as a member of Christ, the past is all forgiven, and if, as the child of God, the present is all provided for, can we be sure of the future, both in this life and in that to come? The answer is to be found in the third gift or blessing which is made ours by the same covenant of grace. At this point we must notice very carefully that in ordinary language "an inheritor" means one who does not yet possess but will possess some day, but in the Bible language, which our Prayer Book here follows, "inheritor" means one who already actually possesses in some measure though not completely. What then does "the kingdom of heaven" mean and how may we be said to possess it? The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God means two things—



(a) The presence and authority of God as our King here and now.

(b) The presence and rule of God hereafter in another world.

The first part of the meaning is spiritual, and the possessions are mainly invisible in the heart. The second part of the meaning is also spiritual, and will be realized both by visible and inward blessings when sin shall be no more. Our present possession of this kingdom of heaven is assured by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who is also the pledge that we shall "finally reach the land of everlasting life" (see, e.g., Eph. i. 13, 14). Thus the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit covers the present and future of our life, and meets our need as we contemplate the future, whether here or hereafter.

With these three blessings—

- (1) Forgiveness and Life ;
- (2) Strength and Protection ;
- (3) Grace and Glory ;

our whole life, past, present and future, in time and eternity, is provided for. All God's gifts under all possible circumstances may be said to be included in this short statement of our Catechism. There is nothing beyond or besides them. They sum up everything actual, possible, or conceivable from the beginning to the end, from earth to heaven. How complete, how comprehensive, how perfect are these blessings !

And all these are ours, not because of any merit of our own, but because of the undeserved favour and love of God. That "God is Love" is the great foundation of all these things. In the largest and widest circle of that love is the world (John iii. 16). In a narrower circle we have God's special love to the Church, or the whole company of Christians (Eph. v. 25). And in the very centre is the smallest possible circle of God's love to the individual Christian (Gal. ii. 20) ; and thus—

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it."

"Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

These gifts and blessings of Divine Love are ours through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They are all included in Him, and when we receive Him through faith we receive everything, pardon, peace, protection, power, purity and the promise, pledge and foretaste of everlasting glory.



## CHAPTER III

## RESPONSIBILITIES

THE blessings referred to in the former chapter are, as we have seen, God's free gifts to us in Christ. The gifts of His grace and love are entirely apart from our personal merit, desert, or works. And yet for the enjoyment of these blessings God has laid down certain requirements or conditions. The realization and personal appreciation of these gifts must obviously depend upon our attitude to God. This is the condition of their reception and of their becoming a power in our life. We are thus naturally brought to consider our personal responsibilities, our side of that Divine Covenant which God makes with His people in the Lord Jesus Christ. All privileges, even in human affairs, carry obligations along with them, and so the Divine blessings and gifts associated with our Baptism involve duties and requirements if we would enter fully and definitely into our glorious heritage of grace. These responsibilities may be seen in the third question and answer of the Church Catechism—

“What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?”

“They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.”

Here we have very clearly brought before us in three words **our whole duty towards God**—

“That I should *renounce*.”—Something to avoid.

“That I should *believe*.”—Something to accept.

“That I should *keep*.”—Something to do.

Or, to put it somewhat differently, we have here **Repentance, Trust, and Obedience**. We shall see presently in greater fullness what these three mean, but for the moment we must look at them as a whole, in their comprehensiveness and completeness. They express our entire responsibility to God, and for the longest and most varied life these three sum up everything that man can be or do in relation to God. They express our attitude to sin in repentance, and our attitude to God in trust and obedience, and they are thus absolutely essential to all Christian living. It is impossible to conceive of our receiving God's gifts unless we are in the right attitude towards God suggested by these requirements. No realization and enjoyment of the blessing of being “a member of Christ” is possible apart from repentance, nor can I fully understand what

it means to be "the child of God" apart from trust in my Heavenly Father, while my position as "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" is quite impossible unless I am obedient to our Heavenly King. Thus our responsibilities correspond to God's gifts, and are the natural and necessary answer of the soul to the offer of God's mercy and grace in Christ.

These responsibilities are impressed upon us in the next question and answer of the Catechism, to which we must pay special attention—

"Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee?"

This is a solemn appeal to **our sense of duty**. Duty means that which is "due" to God from us, and God's "due" is our whole-hearted allegiance, love, loyalty, and obedience. Conscience whispers "I ought," and "I ought" means "I owe it." I owe it to my God and Father to give Him my life's trust and love, and our Church puts this answer into our mouths as the natural, right, and only possible response to God.

"Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our Heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

Let us note every word of **this solemn response**.

- (a) The acknowledgment of responsibility; "Yes, verily."
- (b) The personal resolve; "I will."
- (c) The loving appreciation; "I heartily thank my Heavenly Father."
- (d) The sense of dependence; "by God's help;" "I pray unto God."
- (e) The need of continuance; "that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

Here we have clearly set before us the elements of a true life in the whole-hearted admission and confession of our responsibility to God. "I will"; "I thank"; "I pray." It is the attitude of full surrender and consecration. It is the consciousness that "I believe," and therefore that "I belong." This realization of responsibility is the crown and culmination of the early years of Christian training and influence. It is the believer's awakening to his high privilege and holy calling as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

This consciousness of personal accountability to God is at once the joy and power of the true Christian life. Have we ever definitely and clearly made this surrender to God? Let each be ready to

kneel down and say, "O my God and Father, I remember now what Thy gifts are, I realize something of what my duties are to Thee, and here and now I accept the position and give myself to Thee ; truly I do feel bound to believe and obey, and by Thy grace, I will. I heartily thank Thee for calling me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray Thee, my God and Father, to give me Thy grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

## CHAPTER IV

### INSTRUCTION

THE soul is thus regarded as in a state of salvation, a condition of safety, of being saved. Salvation, in the Bible meaning of that great term, refers to the past, the present, and the future. As we think of the past with the condemnation and guilt of sin, we are "saved." As we consider the present with the power and love of sin, we are "being saved." As we look on to the future with the prospect of deliverance from the presence of sin, we "shall be saved." And with a clear recognition of this position of privilege and responsibility we naturally ask how it is to be maintained. The answer is, by instruction in and experience of the essential elements of the Christian life.

(a) Our relation to sin ; Repentance.

(b) Our relation to God ; Trust.

(c) Our relation to duty ; Obedience.

(d) Our relation to grace ; use of the Means of grace, Prayer, the Bible, the Sacraments.

Christianity is therefore pre-eminently **a religion requiring intelligence**. Knowledge is power, and it is by knowledge that we come to realize what it means to be a Christian. There can be no full Christian life without definite, careful, clear, and continuous instruction in what our various relations involve. From the very earliest moment our Church emphasizes this necessity of knowledge. There are, first of all, the full explanations found in the Baptismal Service itself. Then the Godparents are urged to have the child instructed through sermons and by means of the Creed, and "all other things that a Christian ought to believe and know to his soul's health" ; while before Confirmation the child is to be taught and instructed in the Church Catechism. This stress on knowledge is the real meaning of our Lord's words, "Thou shalt love the Lord

thy God with all thy *mind*." Christianity is a reasonable religion, that is, it appeals to man's reason, instructing and furnishing his mind with all necessary guidance for daily living. It is the only religion in the world which can properly be said to have a rational basis, and the more we exercise our mind on the truths of the Christian religion the more we shall enter into it by personal experience and the more fully appreciate its truth and beauty. We can also see this emphasis on instruction in our Church's reference to the "vulgar tongue," that is, the ordinary language of the people. When our English Prayer Book was first compiled there was very little available in English to instruct and guide the people. Almost everything about religion was in the Latin language. But inasmuch as that was almost a dead language for the majority of the people, prayers in it could not possibly minister to devotion and true life. The Church of England, therefore, rightly insisted upon all the prayers being in a language that everyone could understand. All through our Church Services there is a constant emphasis placed on the full understanding of what Christianity means, what worship and duty really involve. To the main elements of this instruction we must now address ourselves in order to see what the Christian life requires from us, and how we may enter into the fullness of its privileges and blessings.

## CHAPTER V

### REPENTANCE

THE first promise made for us at our Baptism was, that we should "renounce." But renounce what? The answer in one word is, Sin. What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law" of God; or, quite literally, "Sin is lawlessness," i.e. the absence of all authority and the denial of all obligation to God. (1 John iii. 4). Sin as thus understood is an evil principle which came into the world when Adam and Eve were tempted and fell. Its root was their desire to be independent of God, to cross the boundary which He had laid down for them. This led to the terrible disaster of the entrance of sin, and ever since that day this evil principle has affected all men, so that now "all have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23); "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii. 10). Sin has affected our lives in many and various ways; it has disturbed our true relations with God, and as a consequence of this it has disturbed our true relations with one



another, and the true relations of the different parts of our own nature among themselves.

It follows therefore, that as sin is the "abominable thing which God hates" (Jer. xlv. 4), and as He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity" (Hab. i. 13), we must of necessity take up the right attitude against sin if we would live the Christian life and be pleasing to God. This attitude is summed up in the word "renounce," that is, to have nothing to do with sin, deliberately to give up our allegiance to it, and to maintain this position day by day.

Sin comes to us in three ways—

(1) From the devil, the original author of all evil.

(2) From the world, that is, everything that is evil, or that may lead to evil, in the life around us (persons, places, and things).

(3) From the flesh, that is, the evil principle in our own nature and life.

These are our three enemies, above us, around us, within us.

1. **"The devil, and all his works."** The Bible teaches us that the devil is a spirit, a fallen angel, who fell probably through pride and a desire to be equal with God. He is a personal being who now hates God, and all that is good, and shows his hatred by opposing God and tempting God's people. He is already cast down to hell (2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6; Matt. xxv. 41), though he still has power to influence men for evil. He is called in the Bible by a variety of names—"The wicked one" (Matt. xiii. 19); "the devil" (Luke iv. 6); "a murderer" (John vii. 44); "a liar and the father of it" (John viii. 44; Acts v. 3); the blinder of men (2 Cor. iv. 4); a beguiler of men (2 Cor. xi. 3, 14); the "adversary" who seeks to devour (1 Pet. v. 8); "the old serpent and accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 9, 10).

The most familiar of these is the term "devil," which means "slanderer" or "accuser" because he gives a false character of God to man (as to Eve, Gen. iii. 4, 5), and a false character of man to God (Job i. 9-12). He tempts us by trying to lead us into sin, and this work he has been doing all through the ages.

Strictly speaking, his works include all sins (1 John iii. 8), but there are some sins to which he tempts us personally and directly rather than through the world and the flesh. These special works of the devil are—

(a) Unbelief: The root and foundation of all sin. Believing the devil instead of God, doubting and disbelieving God, having hard thoughts of God, questioning and doubting His wisdom and love (Gen. iii. 4, 5).

(b) Pride: Entertaining high thoughts of ourselves, our own powers, ambitions, desires, and aims (1 Tim. iii. 6).



(c) Hatred : Unkind, ungenerous, and unjust thoughts of others, envy, discontent, and malice (John viii. 44).

(d) Lying : Lying and hypocrisy ; unreality and falsehood in thought, word and deed (John viii. 44).

(e) Temptation of others : doing the work of Satan ourselves (Matt. xviii. 6, 7).

A careful study of the Bible will reveal to us a great deal about the devil which it is of great importance to know and remember carefully and constantly. He rules the ungodly of this world (Eph. ii. 1, 2), and is ever warring against the godly (Eph. vi. 10-12). He is called the "god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4) ; "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31) ; "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2) ; and we are told that "the whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John v. 19, R.V.).

Yet while we remember all this we should also recollect that—

(1) Temptation of the devil is not necessarily a sign that our lives are not right with God, but more likely a sign that they are right. The devil has no need to tempt the man who lives in sin, he leaves him alone. The devil always tempts God's children and those who desire to become Christians. We should remember for our comfort and encouragement that all the temptations of Satan recorded in the Scriptures are temptations of the people of God. We can see this from the temptation of Adam and Eve right through the Bible until we come to the temptations of our Lord and His Apostles.

(2) Satan can only tempt, he cannot compel us to yield. The sin must be our own if we fall, and if we do not consent, not even the fiercest of the temptations can have power over us, and so it is written, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James iv. 7).

(3) Satan has already been conquered by our Lord (John xii. 31 and xiv. 30 ; Heb. ii. 14, 15), and it is possible for us to enter into the fruit and power of this victory by trusting our Lord, and receiving Him and His grace into our hearts.

(4) Our Lord ever intercedes for us in heaven (Luke xxii. 32 ; Rom. viii. 27 ; Heb. vii. 25), keeps us when tempted (Rev. iii. 10), and will always make a way of escape that we may be able to bear temptation (1 Cor. x. 13 ; Heb. iv. 15).

2. "The pomps and vanity of this wicked world." By the world is here meant all in it that has a tendency to lead us into sin. The world, in this sense, sometimes means the people of the world regarded as evil (John xv. 19 ; Phil. iii. 18, 19), or it may mean the things of the world (1 John ii. 15). Temptation to evil often comes from evil companions and from the particular standard of society around us, its pleasures, fashions, opinions, and aims.

This is what St. John meant when he spoke of the "lust of the eyes." The late Bishop Westcott once defined the world as "the organization of society as alien from, and opposed to God."

But while it is often easy to detect the actual evil of the world, it is not by any means so easy to detect its possible evil. The "pumps and vanities" do not necessarily refer to that which is inherently sinful but that which is unreal, empty, and transitory as compared with the substantial realities of the kingdom of heaven. There are many pumps and vanities which are undoubtedly sinful, but there are other aspects of the world which only reveal themselves as sinful to the spiritual perception and experience of the true disciple. No greater difficulty meets the young and inexperienced Christian than the attempt to discover what worldliness really is. There are certain elements of daily life which are not sinful in themselves but which have a tendency to lead to sin if they are abused. "Abuse" literally means "extreme use," and in many instances "over-use" of things lawful becomes sin. Pleasure is lawful in use but unlawful in its over-use. Ambition is an essential part of true character, but it must be fixed on lawful objects and exercised in proper proportion. Our daily occupation, reading, dress, friendships, and other similar phases of life are all legitimate and necessary, but can easily become illegitimate, unnecessary and harmful. Thought about the necessities of life is absolutely essential, but this can easily degenerate into anxiety, and then, as our Lord reminds us in the parable, the cares of this life choke the spiritual seed in the heart. Making of money is necessary for daily living, but money-making is apt to degenerate into money-loving, and then the deceitfulness of riches enters into and spoils our spiritual life.

Worldliness is thus not confined to any particular rank, walk or circumstances of life, so that we cannot separate this class from that and call one worldly and the other unworldly, one spiritual and the other unspiritual. Worldliness is a spirit, an atmosphere, an influence permeating the whole of life and human society, and it needs to be guarded against constantly and strenuously.

Is it possible then to settle these doubtful questions? Is it possible to be on our guard against these influences which are just on the border-lines between good and evil? We believe it is not only possible, but as necessary as it is possible. One simple question earnestly and prayerfully asked will settle 95 per cent. of these problems without difficulty. It is this: "What would the Lord Jesus have me to do?" Or, to put it in another way: "Can I ask His sanction and His blessing on the particular thing before me?" This question applied to amusements, recreations, books,

companions, standards of society, will always afford a definite and decisive answer to our problem. It is not by looking within to our wishes which may be deceptive, or by looking around and following the example of others, but by "looking off unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2, Greek), that we shall settle the question of what is worldliness for us. "In His light shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9), and in fellowship with Him we shall be continually warned against any lowering of the Christian standard.

In crossing the Atlantic at certain seasons of the year, the passengers notice a man letting down by a long cord what seems to be a thermometer, and after a few moments drawing it up, examining it, and reporting the result to the officer in charge. If the temperature of the water is fairly high there is no danger, but if the temperature is low it means that icebergs are somewhere about, even though they cannot then be seen. In like manner, those who ask this simple question, "What would my Master wish me to do?" immediately and inevitably find the answer in their own spiritual condition. If they are occupied with Him, He will warn them long beforehand when there is any lowering of the spiritual temperature or any likelihood of spiritual danger. They will become renewed in their mind, and thus be enabled to distinguish God's will for them (Rom. xii. 2).

In regard to those matters which still remain doubtful and about which it seems impossible at once to obtain the needed light, two great principles of Holy Scripture should guide us—

(a) "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). That is, if our hearts cannot exercise themselves definitely in trust in God concerning the particular matter, we must have nothing to do with it.

(b) "He that doubteth is condemned if he" . . . do it (Rom. xiv. 23). That is, we must never do anything about which we are not perfectly clear and certain. It may be added that another test is often efficacious when applied to things doubtful. Will this affect others for evil? What influence will my example have? "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7), and the Christian is a follower of Him of whom it is recorded that "He pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3), and every disciple is exhorted to "please his neighbour for his good unto edification" (Rom. xv. 2).

3. **"The sinful lusts of the flesh."** By the flesh is to be understood the evil tendency of our nature within. It is called "the flesh" because it has its seat and sphere of action in and through our mortal body. It is our fallen human nature with its propensity to listen to the devil, to love the world and to exercise its evil dispositions, tempers and tastes which are ever contrary to

the spirit and will of God. The "flesh" is also used in a narrower and more limited sense as referring to a particular class of evil to which we are prone by the excessive gratification of our fleshly appetites; what the Baptismal Service calls the "carnal lusts of the flesh." These are in part the sins against the seventh commandment.

We must however distinguish very carefully here also between use and abuse, between that which is lawful and that which is unlawful. The original meaning of the word "lust" is strong desire, and not necessarily a sinful desire, since there are certain desires of our physical nature, such as hunger and thirst, which we have in common with the animal world, and which in themselves are natural and not sinful. It is only their abuse that is evil. Hunger is a lust; gluttony is a sinful lust. Thirst is a lust; intemperance is a sinful lust. Sleep is a lust; sloth is a sinful lust. Marriage is according to the will of God and the dictates of human nature, physical, mental and social. Adultery is a sin, and is opposed to the will of God, and to all that is pure in body, mind and heart. But there are other lusts of the flesh which are essentially and inherently sinful; such, for instance, as the desire to gratify at all costs our hatred and revenge. We must therefore distinguish carefully between the lust which is simply a strong desire and the same lust as a sinful desire.

Sins of the flesh are in some respects the most terrible of all, because they represent the yearning of the nature to do evil, no matter how or whence it may come. Neither the devil, nor the world, nor even our own evil heart can compel us to sin. It must be by our consent and will, and it is at this point that our evil nature and propensity comes in with its awful power and possibility of evil.

These then are our three foes: the devil, the world and the flesh; and, as we can clearly see, our attitude to them as Christians is summed up in the one word "renounce." There must be no parleying, no bargaining, no compromise, no hesitation. Absolute renunciation is alone right, safe and possible to the Christian. This is what we mean by Repentance, about which so many mistakes are made. Some confuse Repentance with conviction of sin, but it is only too possible to have a sense of sin without being genuinely repentant. Others confound it with contrition and penitence, but it is only too possible to have sorrow for sin without being truly repentant. These are but the initial stages of the complete attitude which we designate by the term Repentance. The original word "repent" means to "change one's mind," as in St. Mark i. 15: "*Change your mind*, and believe the Gospel." St. Paul summed up his gospel as "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21; see also Acts xi. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 25).



Our Catechism accurately defines it thus : " Repentance : whereby we *forsake* sin." This is the essence of the whole matter, and the hymn of our childhood clearly sums up the teaching of the Bible and Prayer Book :

" 'Tis not enough to say  
I'm sorry, and repent,  
And then go on from day to day  
Just as I always went.

Repentance is to leave  
The sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve  
By doing them no more."

So that we must have—

- (1) Conviction of sin ;
- (2) Contrition for sin ;
- (3) Confession of sin ;
- (4) Conversion from sin ;

if we would really understand what is meant by Repentance.

Lest, however, we should think that all this is impossible and too high for ordinary life, it must be remembered that Repentance is made possible, and renunciation of the world, the flesh and the devil is made possible, by God's wonderful provision of grace in Christ Jesus. It is only by the positive power of new life within the soul that the right attitude against sin can be maintained. Repentance is the direct result of our Lord's redeeming work, for He has been " exalted to *give* repentance " (Acts v. 31), and He is ready to give it to all who are ready to receive it. The soul to be emptied of sin must be filled with grace ; and so the Word of God provides for the very opposite of our three foes, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(a) In relation to the devil : we resist him only as we " submit ourselves to God " (Jas. iv. 7).

(b) In relation to the world : " This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith " (1 John v. 4).

(c) In relation to the flesh : " Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh " (Gal. v. 16).

## CHAPTER VI

### FAITH

THE second promise made for us at the time of our Baptism was that " we should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith." This statement merits our closest attention on several grounds.

**1. The Meaning of Faith.** The word Faith is used in two senses, both in the New Testament and also in the Prayer Book. It is used generally to express the act or attitude of believing, but it is also used to denote the substance of that which we believe, as in the phrase, "The Christian Faith" (see Jude 3). Confining ourselves now to the former meaning, it is necessary to be clear as to what the act or attitude of believing really means. In its fullest and truest sense faith is an act or attitude of the whole of our inner nature in relation to some other person, whether divine or human. The mind receives certain things as true because of the person behind them who guarantees them. The heart impressed by these truths feels their value and rests on them, and the will thus stirred by mind and heart accepts and acts on the truths. So that faith really includes—

- (a) The conviction of the mind.
- (b) The confidence of the heart.
- (c) The consent of the will.

This is the meaning of our word "trust." It is the outgoing of the whole nature to One who is true. Our trust is our response to God's Truth.

**2. The Object of Faith.** At this point, however, we need to distinguish between believing things or truths, and trusting a person. We are to believe "all the Articles of the Christian Faith," that is, the various parts or points of the true Christian religion, but such belief is not an end in itself. It is rather the consequence of a true beginning, i.e. faith in God. The Supreme Object of full Christian trust is none other than God Himself. We can see this from what follows in the Catechism. "What dost thou chiefly learn by these articles of thy belief?" "I learn to believe in God." It is possible to believe with an intellectual conviction of the facts and truths of Christianity and yet to fall short of trust in God. We are told that "the devils believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19); they have intellectual conviction, but not personal trust. So we must define Christian faith as personal trust in a person, or, our trust in God.

In many passages of Scripture we see these elements and this ground of faith. Our Lord teaches us in one passage (John v. 24) the two stages of faith. (a) "Hearing My Word," that is, the intellectual reception and acceptance of what Christ said. (b) "Believing on Him that sent Me," that is, personal trust in God arising out of the acceptance of Christ's Word. Nothing short of this full Christian faith can satisfy the requirements of the Christian religion. We must by all means gather, ponder and accept all Christian facts and truths, for they are the food and warrant of our full trust; but



they are intended only to lead to this full trust, the outgoing of the whole soul and nature in personal confidence in God.

3. **The Necessity of Faith.** It is easy to understand how necessary and important faith is. It is the foundation principle of our earthly life in every aspect of relationship. The little child lives by trust in parents and servants. The child first learns at school by taking on trust the word of the teacher. Afterwards, in matters of business, faith is at the root of every relation between master and servant. In commerce, business between firms and customers would be impossible without faith. Communication between nation and nation is also based on mutual trust. We can readily see, therefore, that so great and far-reaching a principle would naturally enter into religion, and we can now appreciate the force of the statement of the Apostle, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). Trust is the only adequate answer to God's revelation. Just as the absence of faith makes it impossible for father and child, or master and servant to have any fellowship, or even dealings, with each other, so the absence of trust in God makes it entirely impossible for us to have any spiritual communication and personal association with Him. Not without real force then is the word, "He that cometh to God must believe" (Heb. xi. 6). Trust is the correlative of Truth. Faith in man answers to grace in God. It is our response to God's revelation, the link between God and man, and the channel of all Divine blessing.

4. **The Rule of Faith.** When once we have learnt that God is the true Object of faith we naturally inquire what we are to believe about God, and our inquiry is met by being directed to the Holy Scriptures. These are the guide, rule and standard of our faith, and the supreme authority as to what we are to believe. God has given to His people a written revelation of Himself and His will, and that written revelation tells us clearly all that it is necessary for us to know about God. The more we read and ponder this revelation the more we shall trust the God Who is revealed there. One of the most important principles of life is to be found in these words: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). In the early Church men heard the Apostles preach God's message or Word, and on hearing, accepted the message, and trust in God was the result. It is the same in ordinary life; the more we know of a person, and the closer our acquaintance, the better we understand and trust him; and in like manner, the more we study God's character as revealed in the Bible, and the better we get to know Him, the fuller, clearer and stronger will be our faith.

The Bible is therefore of the first importance for Christian living.

In theological language, it is "the Rule of Faith," that is, the rule, or guide, or standard of our trust, affording information for our faith, and a protection against believing error. This prominence and importance of the Bible is emphasized all through the Prayer Book. In the Baptismal Service the Godparents are urged constantly to believe God's Holy Word. In the Catechism we are reminded of "Faith; whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God." The three Creeds or Confessions of our belief which are in turn to be used at the daily and weekly services "ought thoroughly to be received and believed," as Article VIII declares, because "they may be proved by most warrants of Holy Scripture." Article VI crowns all by saying that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation."

We believe the teaching of the Church of England because it is derived from God's Word. We believe the promises of God made to us at our Baptism because they are to be found in God's Word. We believe the Bible because it is the Word of God, and we believe God as He is revealed to us in that Word. If we had no such standard or rule for our faith we might believe anything we liked or anything we were taught about God. As it is, we are protected from either believing too little or too much by accepting, studying, and following the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the written revelation of God to man through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But it may be said, and very rightly, that the Bible is a large Book, and that it is impossible for young people and people of limited time to gather out for themselves all that should be believed about God. There is great force in this plea, as we can readily understand when we recall the fact that the Church of England offers to children and young people the chief points of the Christian faith in the form of a summary statement of what the Bible teaches. These summaries are called Creeds, which we now proceed to consider.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CREEDS

THE word "Creed" comes from the Latin *credo* ("I believe") and is applied to the substance of our faith, or what we believe. There are three documents which bear this name, and they are commonly called, the "Apostles' Creed," the "Nicene Creed," and the "Athanasian Creed."

**1. The Apostles' Creed.** This is so called because it expresses what the Apostles believed and taught. The earliest and smallest Creed or Confession of belief is probably that which St. Peter expressed, "We believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). In this short statement we have the germ and promise of all that we find in the three Creeds, or indeed in the New Testament. Christianity is personal devotion to the Person of Christ, and this carries with it all else.

The present Apostles' Creed is probably an expansion of the well-known statement of our Lord when He gave His great command to His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). As long as the Church remained in the freshness and fullness of devotion to Christ, nothing else but St. Peter's short Creed was felt necessary, but as the Church became opposed by heresies within and enemies without, this simple confession of faith had to be amplified, and thus gradually through the ages clause after clause was added, until at length we have the Apostles' Creed as it now stands. Traces of parts of this Creed are found as early as the end of the second century of the Christian era, and our present form of the Creed is found first in the fourth century. It was taught to candidates before Baptism, and at the time of Baptism repeated by them as a declaration of faith. Yet in this amplification it is to be noted that we have passed insensibly, but very really, from faith in the strict sense to knowledge, from personal devotion to intellectual apprehension, and we must therefore be ever on our guard against supposing that the intellectual acceptance of the propositions of the Apostles' Creed is in any real sense the equivalent of Christian Faith or Trust in a personal Saviour and God. This intellectual expression and expansion is a natural and necessary outcome of personal trust in Christ, but it can never take its place. Intellectual orthodoxy is no substitute for the response of the heart. We can see the force of this in the question and answer of the Catechism—

*Q.* What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

*A.* First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

The emphasis is very rightly placed on believing in God, and not merely believing facts and truths about Him.

It is interesting and profitable to go through the Creed, word by word, and clause by clause, and compare it with Holy Scripture. It will thus be very easily proved "by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture" (Article VIII).

2. **The Nicene Creed.** This longer Creed, which we use at Holy Communion, is much more elaborate and theological than the simpler Apostles' Creed. The latter deals with the facts of our faith, the former with certain explanations of it in opposition to particular errors. The distinctive features of this Creed, which characterize it as "Nicene," date from the Council of Nicaea in 325, and were inserted to protect the Church against teaching which denied the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. The various clauses about the Holy Spirit in the last part of the Creed were added in 381 at the Council of Constantinople. Its use at Holy Communion is specially appropriate, as expressive of a maturer experience of the Christian life than we have a right to expect from those who use the Apostles' Creed as a Baptismal Confession. The Nicene Creed presupposes a Christian experience higher than that of a beginner, and is on this account fitly included in the Service of the Lord's Supper, which is the privilege and joy of the Christian worshipper.

3. **The Athanasian Creed.** This document is not really a Creed, but an exposition of the meaning of the Nicene Creed on the two great points of the Holy Trinity and our Lord's Incarnation. Originally it does not seem to have been intended for use as a Creed, but only as a means of instruction and as a warning against false doctrine. It is called Athanasian, after the name of the great leader of the Christian Faith at the Council of Nicaea. Athanasius died in A.D. 373, but this Creed was probably not composed until about a century after his time, though it is appropriately associated in name with this great champion of those Christian truths to which it gives expression.

In this Creed we have the phrase "the Catholic Faith." This means the Christian truth which is everywhere believed among Christians, the universally accepted beliefs concerning God as revealed in the Word of God. The word *Catholic* ("universal") points first to the world-wide diffusion of the full truth of the Gospel, and then to the careful adherence to it on the part of all Christians. We may compare with the phrase "Catholic Faith" the following statements of the New Testament: "The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, R.V.); "the common faith" (Titus i. 4); "the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. i. 27). The "Christian Faith" is also called "Catholic" because it includes everything that God revealed "for us men and our salvation." We



may therefore associate four ideas with "the Catholic Faith": universality, or world-wide diffusion; continuity, or continued adherence to Apostolic doctrine; integrity, or full and complete acceptance; purity, or faithful acceptance free from erroneous admixture. The warning or condemnation which is found in this Creed is intended as a solemn announcement of the results which follow wilful and deliberate rejection of the essential truths of Revelation.<sup>1</sup>

These three documents are received and used by the Church of England not merely on account of their antiquity and long-continued usage by Christian people, but above and beyond these things, because they may be proved by "most certain warrants of Holy Scripture" (Article VIII).

The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are naturally divided into three parts, according as they express our belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and as the Church Catechism teaches us that we should "chiefly learn three things" from the Creed, we must now examine in detail what these three parts of our belief mean.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *THE CREEDS—(I) THE FATHER*

It is important to notice the personal and individual element in the Creed. It commences "I believe," not "We believe," for it is manifestly impossible for any one to answer for another in the matter of faith. We rightly pray "Our Father" because that is a fact entirely apart from our acceptance of it, but when we deal with faith we are concerned with that which applies solely to the individual who professes it. The word "I" also brings home to each one his own individuality and personal responsibility. How necessary, therefore, for each one who uses the Creed to be able to use it as a fact and privilege of definite personal experience.

The real meaning of belief must also ever be kept in mind. It is the outgoing of the whole nature towards God, the combined action of mind, heart, and will. We believe, we confide, we trust, and thus our whole inner being rests entirely and solely on God.

As God is the Object of our faith we naturally seek to know what is implied in this attitude of trust in Him.

I. "**I believe in God.**" Our English word "God" possibly comes from a word meaning "to worship," though an older interpretation made it synonymous with "good." At any rate when

<sup>1</sup> See further, p. 284.

we speak of God we refer to One who is essentially good, One who is perfect goodness. Holy Scripture commences with the words, "In the beginning God." It does not prove, it takes for granted, the existence of God, a Supreme Being Who existed before all things, to Whom we are subject, and on Whom we depend for life and all things. It is very helpful to us to bear in mind that this Supreme Being is known to us by the name of "God," the One on whom we depend, for thus our first thought is about the goodness of God. This is the foundation of our trust. We rest on One who is perfectly good and herein our minds and hearts are at peace.

2. "I believe in God **the Father.**" This Good One is our Father. The word "Father" brings before us His personal relation to us, and we must endeavour to understand what Scripture teaches us about the Fatherhood of God. The term is applied to God in several senses.

(a) He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3). This refers to the unique position of our Lord whereby the relations of Father and Son are eternally applicable to them. This is of necessity something unique and transcends all our experience.

(b) God may be said to be the Father of all things created by Him (Acts xvii. 28), though this title is not specifically and prominently brought before us in Scripture in relation to our creation.

(c) The true meaning of God's Fatherhood is His relation to us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is pre-eminently a revelation of the New Testament alone. The Jews thought of God as their Father from the national point of view, but it is very rare to find any consciousness of His individual Fatherhood in the Old Testament. When, however, we turn to the New Testament we are at once confronted with the new and glorious fact that by reason of our personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ we become children of God, sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty (John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14; Gal. iii. 26; 1 John iii. 1). It is in this last sense that we are to understand the Creed, and especially the teaching of the Catechism as to the individual Christian being "the child of God."

3. "I believe in God the Father **Almighty.**" The addition of the last word is necessary and helpful, suggesting the difference between earthly limited Fatherhood and the Fatherhood of God. The Creed is essentially practical in its bearing throughout, and "Almighty" necessarily means "able to do all things" on behalf of those who trust Him. The New Testament is very clear about God's Omnipotence in relation to His people. "He is able to save to the uttermost" (Heb. vii. 25). He "is able to make all



grace abound " (2 Cor. ix. 8). He " is able to keep us from falling " (Jude 24). " He is able to succour them that are tempted " (Heb. ii. 18). He " is able to build us up " (Acts xx. 32). He " is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think " (Eph. iii. 20). Thus we confess our faith in One Who is at once Father and Almighty, Who has both willingness and ability to provide all things sufficient for life and godliness.

4. " I believe in God the Father Almighty, **Maker of Heaven and Earth.**" This is the great and overwhelming proof of the Almightyness or Omnipotence of God, His power in the creation of the universe, and the Creed very beautifully follows the teaching of those Psalms which associate our daily life with Him Who made heaven and earth. " My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth " (Ps. cxxi. 2). " Our help is in the Name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth " (Ps. cxxiv. 8). " The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion " (Ps. cxxxiv. 3).

## CHAPTER IX

### *THE CREEDS—(2) THE SON*

THE first chapter of the Old Testament reveals God in Himself as the Creator. The first chapter of the New Testament reveals " God with us " in the Person of Jesus Christ. The purpose of God for man could only be realized by the full revelation of Himself in His Son. " God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son " (Heb. i. 1, 2). The full meaning of this revelation of God in Christ we must now consider.

1. **His Person.** " Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord."

(a) " Jesus." This name was given by the angel (Matt. i. 21), and is the equivalent of Jehoshua, or Joshua, in the Old Testament, which means Jehovah the Saviour. The peculiar and special meaning of it shows why our Lord came to this earth. " Thou shalt call His Name **Jesus** : for He shall save His people from their sins " (Matt. i. 21).

(b) " Christ." This word, or better, " The Christ," is the equivalent of the Hebrew word " Messiah," or " Anointed One," sent by God to be the Saviour. As the Old Testament kings, priests, and prophets were anointed as the outward and visible proof of their appointment to office, so Jesus is the Anointed of God (Luke iv. 18 ; Acts x. 38), and appointed to be the Saviour of mankind.

(c) "His only Son." "Only" is here used in the sense of "unique," and it refers to the special and exceptional relation between the Father and the Son. Our Lord distinguished His Sonship from ours (John xx. 17), and carefully excluded Himself when He taught His disciples to pray "Our Father."

(d) "Our Lord." This teaches us the true, full and necessary relation between us and Christ. He is our Lord. His Lordship implies control and submission, and this attitude is necessarily involved from the very beginning of our Christian life. He is only our Saviour when He becomes our Lord. "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord" (Rom. xiv. 9). "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John xiii. 13).

We see then how the Creed concentrates our attention on the Person of Christ as the Object of our faith. Christianity is best understood as "devotion to a Person," and that Person a Divine One, and the devotion is the trustful dependence on Him and whole-hearted surrender to Him. Having thus learned to trust in a Person, we are at once led to know all we can about Him, and especially the most important facts of His manifestation which are brought before us in Holy Scripture.

2. **His Incarnation.** "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary." He Who was from eternity the Son of God and dwelt with the Father, took human nature and was born of the Virgin Mary by the Divine power of the Holy Spirit. We read of this in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and it has been the unbroken faith of the whole Christian Church ever since the days of the Apostles. The best way of approaching this subject is to concentrate attention first of all on the fact that in the Gospels the earthly life of Jesus is unique. Nothing like it is found in history; a supernatural Personality with miraculous powers. When our faith has accepted this we naturally seek to inquire how it was possible for One to appear so different from all other human beings? The answer is contained in the Creed. "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary." It is the only possible answer, and the only adequate explanation of the facts of the case. Our Lord's supernatural life demands a supernatural birth as its adequate cause. This article of the Creed therefore, while not one that comes first in the order of reception by those who are not yet Christians, is a necessary consequence of the acceptance of Christ, for when the mind begins to inquire as to the intellectual grounds of its belief in Christ, His supernatural character and personality compel belief in His supernatural birth.

The Creed passes on to state why our Lord became Incarnate.

3. **His Death.** "Crucified, dead, and buried." It is suggestive and, of course, significant that the Creed hastens at once from the Incarnation to the Death of our Lord, omitting all reference to His earthly life. His life is not properly a subject for belief, but for example and obedience, and moreover our Lord came to earth for the express purpose of dying. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

(a) The Mode of the Death. "Crucified."

(b) The Fact of the Death. "Dead."

(c) The Proof of the Death. "Buried."

It is noteworthy that we have here only the historic facts, not their spiritual contents and meaning. It is necessary to fix attention first of all on the fact of our Lord's Death, which is central in Scripture, Prayer Book, and all history. The meaning of the Death is best stated in one word, "Sacrifice." It was a sacrificial Death, not the death of a martyr or merely of an example, but of One Who gave Himself for a sacrifice. He died, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3). For this reason we call the Death an Atonement, because it was caused by sin and was for the purpose of putting an end to sin.<sup>1</sup>

4. **His Descent into Hades.** The term "hell" as used in the Creed is the equivalent of the Greek "Hades," the Unseen Place, and the meaning of the phrase is that our Lord's spirit, when it left the body, went to the place where the spirits of the departed remain waiting the Resurrection. The article is intended to emphasize Christ's perfect Manhood and His complete oneness with us at every stage of His human life. Thus we have His Birth, His Growth, His Life, His Death, His Burial, His spirit waiting Resurrection, His Resurrection, His Ascension. With this in view the article, though later in date than most of the other articles of the Apostles' Creed, is appropriate as following that on the Death and prior to the one on the Resurrection. The Scripture authority for the article is found in Acts ii. 27, quoting Ps. xvi. 10, and possibly Eph. iv. 9.

5. **His Resurrection.** The fact and circumstances of the Resurrection of our Lord are very prominent in the New Testament. The event was predicted by our Lord Himself (Matt. xvi. 21 ; xvii. 23 ; John ii. 19). The records of the appearances after the Resurrection are very full, varied, and detailed. The Resurrection was also made very prominent in Apostolic preaching (1 Cor. xv. 1-4), and it is

<sup>1</sup> See more fully on p. 51.

connected in many passages in the Epistles with the Christian life and hope (Rom. vi. 4, 5 ; Eph. i. 20-23 ; 1 Thess. iv. 14-17). It is not surprising therefore that it should appear in the Creed as an essential part of our Christian faith, for all through the centuries it has held a very prominent place in Christian thought, worship, and life ; indeed, it is hardly too much to say that in some respects Easter is the predominant Festival of the Christian Church. The spiritual meaning of the Resurrection is very full and comprehensive. The Resurrection vindicated our Lord's character (Acts ii. 24). It also sealed and certified God's acceptance of His atoning Sacrifice as the assurance that that Sacrifice was sufficient for the sins of the whole world (Rom. iv. 25). The Resurrection moreover is the Divine means of our holiness, for we receive the risen life of our Lord into our lives and are enabled to live the resurrection life of holiness and righteousness (Rom. vi. 4, 11 ; Col. iii. 1-3). Last of all, the Resurrection guarantees and pledges our own resurrection, our Lord being the first fruits of them that are asleep. Thus, the Resurrection enters into every part and aspect of the Christian revelation in its relation to our personal life.

There are four main proofs of the Resurrection—

(a) The disappearance of our Lord's Body. The Body must have been taken out of the tomb either by human hands or by supernatural power. The human hands must have been those of friends or enemies. If taken by the hands of friends the question at once arises whether they were able to do it in the face of the stone, the seal, and the Roman guard. If, however, the Body was taken out by His enemies we naturally ask whether they would have been willing to do it in view of their manifest recollection of His words about rising from the dead. To have taken His Body out of the tomb would have given colour to this idea. Besides, if the Body had been in their possession they would have been able to face St. Peter with it when he proclaimed the Resurrection in that very city only six weeks afterwards (Acts ii. 24). We are therefore compelled to fall back on the only possible alternative ; the Body was taken out of the tomb by supernatural power.

(b) The testimony of the Apostles. Notwithstanding the fact of our Lord's repeated assurance to His disciples that He would rise from the dead, not one of them believed it, and all the circumstances connected with His Death and Burial clearly show that they never expected to see their Master alive again. Even after His Resurrection they were very slow to believe, and one of their number positively refused to do so unless he himself could see and touch the living Body of his Master. Yet here is the remarkable fact, that when once they became convinced of the reality of the



Resurrection they never doubted again, and not only this, they made the Resurrection the prominent note of their preaching. Wherever they went the burden of their message was "Jesus and the Resurrection," and for the proclamation of this they suffered imprisonment, persecution, and even death. Men do not suffer like this for that which is unreal and visionary. They might have continued in peace in their homes without further difficulty after the death of Jesus, but instead of this they faced the worst troubles in proclaiming their Master's Resurrection. This testimony is one of the striking facts of history.

(c) The existence of the Church. Whatever view we take of Christianity it is a simple matter of fact that the first community of Christians came together, and was held together, by reason of their belief in the Resurrection of their Lord. Even assuming they were mistaken in their belief, the fact remains that this alone held them together, and one of the proofs that they were not mistaken is that this alone has been the bond of union and the guarantee of the existence of the Church of Christ from that day until now. Stretching across the centuries right up to the time of the Apostles there are three chains linking us with those days. The first is the Lord's Supper, which has been observed week by week as a testimony to the death of Christ. The second is the Lord's Day, which has been observed on the first day of the week in commemoration of the Lord's Resurrection ever since the earliest days of the Church. The third chain is the Ordinance of Baptism, that sacrament of initiation whereby the one baptized is brought into relation and covenant with God through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the simple truth to say that these ordinances and observances are entirely without meaning apart from a belief in the Resurrection, and further, that this belief now covering all these centuries and involving millions of people, cannot be accounted for except on the ground of the Resurrection being a reality.

(d) These three proofs of the Resurrection appeal respectively to our common sense, to our careful consideration of the New Testament narratives, and to our study of Christian history. There is, however, another proof which is the crown of all these: the proof from personal experience. Every believer in Jesus Christ is able to say from personal experience, "Christ liveth in me." The consciousness of what Christ is to the soul in His forgiving grace, His energizing power, His purifying Spirit, and His blessed Presence gives the believer the strongest proof that these experiences cannot possibly come from One Who is dead, but from One Who is Divine and Who is alive for evermore. Thus, the proofs from history find their crown and climax in this argument from the personal experi-



ence of individual believers, and all true Christians are thus fully assured of the Resurrection of their Lord.

**6. His Ascension.** From one point of view the Ascension is the concluding stage of our Lord's exaltation rather than a separate interest. It crowned His work of redemption. Like the High Priest of old, who first offered the sacrifice outside the tabernacle and then entered with the blood into the Most Holy Place, our Lord Jesus Christ first suffered and then ascended into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. This great truth is brought before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, more particularly in chapters ix and x. The atoning work having been accomplished, our Lord "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Heb. i. 3). He has nothing more to offer, for there is no need of anything beyond that one "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world," offered on Calvary. The Lord is our High Priest on the Throne, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. In and through His heavenly Priesthood we have "access into the Holiest," and can "draw near in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 19, 22). He is also our King seated on the Throne until the time shall come for Him to return to this earth to claim and obtain the full consummation of His kingdom. He is now "expecting until His foes be made His footstool" (Heb. x. 13). It is a great spiritual loss that the Ascension is not made more prominent by us than it is, for if it occupied as prominent a place in our thought and life as do the Death and the Resurrection, great spiritual benefit and blessing would accrue to us. When we realize the power and blessing of our Lord's heavenly Priesthood and His Divine advocacy on our behalf, we realize the completeness, assurance, and guarantee of our redemption, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**7. His Coming.** The Creed calls attention first to the *fact*, "From thence He shall come," and then to the *reason*, "To judge both the quick and the dead." The Coming of our Lord is set before us in the New Testament as the hope of the Church. There are over three hundred references in one form or another to this great event. Not death, but the Lord's coming should fill the horizon of the Christian's outlook on the future. This was the attitude of the early Christians, and this should be our attitude if we would be true followers of our Master. No Christian can be occupied with the thought of death without a measure of spiritual gloom, sadness, and, it may be, dread; but no one can think of the Coming of the Lord without finding in it an incentive to holiness, an inspiration to service, and a spiritual joy and satisfaction in the consciousness of reunion with the Master. The Creed simply states, in most simple

terms, the Coming of our Lord to judgment, but Scripture goes very much more into detail, and distinguishes between the Lord coming to judge and reward His own people and His judgment of all men.

Thus the Creed gives the various stages of our Lord's work in order that we may realize intelligently and clearly what faith in Him implies and demands. The Catechism well says, "Secondly, I learn to believe in God the Son, Who hath redeemed *me*, and all mankind." Each one appropriates to himself all the blessings of our Lord's Person and work; all the facts of redemption thus become vital to us and are our own precious possession for time and eternity.

## CHAPTER X

### *THE CREEDS—(3) THE HOLY GHOST*

WHEN we remember that creation took place thousands of years ago, and that even the earthly manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ dates back nineteen hundred years, it becomes a very important and necessary question to inquire how God, in Whom we believe as Creator, Father and Redeemer, can become real to us and be experienced in our lives. The answer is, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," for in the Word of God the Holy Spirit is put before us as the One who reveals and makes real to our souls the benefits and blessings of belief in God. The Holy Spirit has been rightly called "the Executive of the Godhead," for He is the Divine Person who applies personally to the soul the grace and blessing of redemption. From the earliest words of the Old Testament we are reminded of the presence of "The Spirit of God" (Gen. i. 2), and all through the Old Testament times we find the Holy Spirit at work filling men with power (Exod. xxxi. 3; Judges xiv. 6), and enabling the servants of God to do their Divine service (1 Sam. x. 10; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2). When we come to the New Testament the presence of the Spirit of God becomes still clearer as we read of His work, His influence upon such men as John the Baptist (Luke i. 80), and also upon our Lord Himself (Luke i. 35; John iii. 34). Still further revelation is given to us concerning the Spirit by our Lord. He is called the Comforter (John xiv. 26), the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, and His work includes such personal actions as teaching, reproving, speaking, and witnessing (John xiv. 26; xvi. 8, 13). We are thus led to the conviction that the Holy Ghost is God, for no one less than God could do that which is attributed to Him, or

occupy the position given to Him in the New Testament. He can be grieved by the sins of men (Eph. iv. 30). It is possible to blaspheme against Him (Matt. xii. 31, 32), and to lie unto Him is to lie unto God (Acts v. 4). Hence, in the Nicene Creed we have that remarkable fullness of statement of what the Holy Spirit is, who He is, and what He does. He is "the Lord; the Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the prophets." This being the case, we should notice with great care the way in which the subsequent Articles of the Creeds are brought before us. It is evidently intended that we should understand these blessings as brought to us in and through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, and it will help us to note briefly how this comes to pass. All the blessings which are stated in the Creeds are bestowed upon us by the Holy Ghost.

(a) He it is Who unites us to Christ, and thereby makes us members of "the Holy Catholic Church" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

(b) He it is Who dwells in every believer, and enables us to realize "the Communion of Saints," i.e. the union and fellowship of all who belong to God.

(c) He it is Who applies to our souls the efficacy of the atoning Sacrifice whereby we are enabled to receive "the Forgiveness of Sins."

(d) He it is Who will be the means of our resurrection hereafter, and for this reason we confess our belief in "the Resurrection of the Body" (Rom. viii. 11).

(e) He it is Who by His indwelling presence now gives us the pledge, foretaste, and guarantee of "the Life Everlasting," which will be ours in fullness in the world to come.

Well may our Catechism say, "Thirdly, I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth *me*, and all the elect people of God." It will be seen that the significant alteration of the tense "sanctifieth" points to the present, continuous, and perpetual work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people of God, whereby everything that God is and that Jesus Christ our Lord has done becomes ours in blessed reality, in conscious possession and ever deepening experience.

## CHAPTER XI

## EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE CREEDS

## (I) THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I Believe in God.**

THE phrase, "believe in," calls our attention to certain distinctions in the use of the word "believe" which it is of the greatest importance to understand. These distinctions are more clearly understood in the original languages of the Creeds, the Latin of the Apostles' Creed and the Greek of the Nicene. In Latin, *Credo Deum* (*esse*) means I believe God exists; *Credo Deo*, I believe what God says; *Credo in Deum*, I trust God. The last is the language of the Creed, and shows that Christian belief is no mere intellectual credence and acceptance of certain truths, but the confidence of the whole nature in a personal, present God. The same distinction can be seen in the use of the Greek word "believe." In 1 John v. 1, *πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι* "everyone who believes that . . ." i.e. belief in a fact; John iv. 21 we have *πιστενέ μοι*, "believe My Word"; John ii. 11, *ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν*, they *trusted* Him.

**Almighty.**

Latin, *omnipotens*; Greek, *παντοκράτωρ*. The word is used in the Septuagint of the Hebrew phrase "Lord of Hosts." It seems to suggest God as the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe.

**Maker of Heaven and Earth.**

This clause is said to have been borrowed from the Eastern Creeds, and was added to prove God's omnipotence, and also to associate Him with the world, thus guarding against two forms of error: one, that Matter is evil; the other, that Matter is eternal. The universe being thus created by and subject to Him, there need be no fear on the part of any of His creatures that some intermediate being can interpose between them and their Maker.

**Jesus Christ.**

Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Jehoshua" which means "Jehovah is Salvation." Christ is strictly not a personal name, but the title of an office, The Christ, The Messiah, The Anointed One Who is appointed to be the Saviour of the world. In the Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were all thus anointed on being commissioned to their work.



**His Only Son.**

The Latin of "only" is *Unicus, unique*; Greek, *μονογενής*. In the Baptismal Service we have "Only Begotten."

**Our Lord.**

The Greek word which we thus render "Lord" is the New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew "Jehovah." "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord" (Rom. xiv. 9). Cf. Rom. i. 4; Phil. ii. 9-11.

**Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary.**

This Article teaches what is generally known as "the Virgin-Birth," by which is properly meant our Lord's birth from a virgin without human fatherhood. The Article testifies at once to the Divine Source and the human reality of the Incarnation.

**Suffered under Pontius Pilate.**

A testimony to the historical reality of our Lord's Death. A chronological statement of evident importance.

**Crucified, Dead, and Buried.**

The reality of the Death is thus brought before us.

**He Descended into Hell.**

This Article is absent from the Nicene Creed, and though found in a local Creed of the fifth century is only found in the Apostles' Creed generally from the seventh century. "Hell," the covered or unseen place. Anglo-Saxon, "Hellan," to hide, cover; e.g. to "hell" the head, and a "heller" or tiler. The Greek, Hades, is to be carefully distinguished from the place of punishment, Gehenna (Matt. xxiii. 15, marg.). Hades is equivalent to the Hebrew, Sheol, the unseen world (Acts ii. 31).

**The Quick.**

Living, moving (Ps. lv. 15; cxxiv. 3). Cf. *quickset* hedge, *quick-silver*.

**The Holy Ghost.**

Cf. epithet "ghostly" in the Catechism for "spiritual."

**Catholic.**

This word is the almost exact equivalent of the Greek adjective *καθόλικος*, which means "universal," i.e. "that which is diffused throughout the whole." The original application of the word in



connexion with Christianity referred to its geographical extension and diffusion throughout the then known world. Later on came the thought of doctrinal purity and fullness, as seen in the phrase "Catholic Faith," i.e. that which is believed everywhere and by all Christians. Cf. "Thy holy Church *universal*."

### Church.

Our English word comes from the Greek *κυριακή* "that which belongs to the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 20; Rev. i. 10, Greek). The transliteration of the Greek word is more readily seen in the Scottish "Kirk" and in the German "Kirche." The Greek word which we render "Church" (Ecclesia) means an assembly, a congregation.

### The Communion of Saints.

This Article is not in the Nicene Creed, and its date is somewhat late even in the Western Church, not being generally found until the eighth century. The original idea of its insertion was an explanation of the meaning of "Holy Catholic Church." In the New Testament a "Saint" is one who belongs to God. The root idea of the Greek, *ἅγιος*; Latin, *Sanctus*; English, *Saint*, *holy*, is "separation," or consecration, and so, possession by God.

It is necessary to distinguish between Union and Communion. Union is oneness. Communion is conscious oneness. The former is true of all Christians, both living on earth and departed. The latter is only strictly true of those whom we know. At the same time, the Greek word, *κοινωνία*, which is often rendered by the Latin *Communio*, means "partnership," or joint participation. The phrase implies a unity or oneness of life, grace, interests, joys, and hopes among Christian people, and teaches union and mutual dependence one upon another. Christians are not solitary, not mere units, but are held together in a great solidarity in Christ.

"One army of the living God,  
To His command we bow;  
Part of His host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now."

### The Forgiveness of Sins.

This is one of the first and fundamental blessings of the individual Christian life, and hence its prominent place in the Creed. "Forgive" is to "forth give," or to "give forth never to return." Cf. our English "pardon," from the French "par-don."

### The Resurrection of the Body.

In the Latin and in our Baptismal Service we have "Resurrection of the Flesh" (Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 37). Scripture teaches

that there will be an identity between the body buried and the body raised, and at the same time a difference. Our Lord's Resurrection Body is the best illustration we can have of what will take place in our case. The identity and difference are clearly seen in the records of our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection.

### **The Life Everlasting.**

This refers to the future glory subsequent to the Resurrection. The root idea of death in Scripture is *separation*, and there is a threefold death—(1) Spiritual death; the separation of the soul from God. (2) Physical death; the separation of the soul from the body. (3) Everlasting death; the separation of the body and soul from God for ever. In like manner life in Scripture means *union*, and there is a threefold life.—(1) Spiritual life; the union of the soul with God. (2) Physical life; the union of the soul with the body. (3) Everlasting life; the union of the soul and body with God for ever.

### **Amen.**

Our response and assent to the Creed. In the Catechism it is interpreted to mean "So be it," but in the Hebrew it does not appear ever to imply a petition, but a strong assertion, "It is so," or "It shall be so." The word comes from the Hebrew word "true" or "truth," and is a beautiful and appropriate response and testimony of the soul to the truth of the Creed.

## **(II) THE NICENE CREED**

### **All Things Visible and Invisible.**

This Article of the Nicene Creed is characteristic of the Eastern Church. It introduces the idea of an unseen, spiritual world, of which God is the Creator.

### **Begotten of His Father Before all Worlds.**

Here the Nicene Creed attempts to express the twofold truth of Scripture: our Lord's Divine Sonship, and, at the same time, His essential Unity with the Father. There is thus priority of Order together with equality of Nature.

### **God of God.**

In repeating the Creed a slight emphasis should be placed upon "of," because it means "out of," "proceeding from" God.

**Very God.**

That is, genuine, real. Latin, *Verus*. Cf. "True Vine" (John xv. 1); "True Bread" (John vi. 32); "True God" (John xvii. 3).

**Being of One Substance with the Father.**

"One and the same essence." At the Council of Nicaea the Arians, who denied our Lord's full Deity, wanted the word *ὁμοιούσιος*, which means "similar," not identical in essence, i.e. One who was somewhere between Man and God, above the one and below the other. This would only mean similarity without identity, but the truth is not similarity, but sameness of nature (*ὁμοούσιος*). For Scripture proof, see John i. 4; v. 17, 18; viii. 58; x. 30; xvii. 5; Matt. xi. 27; Gal. iv. 4.

**By Whom all Things were made.**

Jesus Christ is thus spoken of as the Divine Agent of creation (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2; Col. i. 16-18).

**And was Made Man.**

This emphasizes the reality of the Manhood as distinct from a mere phantom (John i. 14; 1 John iv. 2).

**The Lord, and Giver of Life.**

See John iii. 5; Rom. v. 5, 8; Gal. v. 22, 25. The phrase "the Lord" should be kept separate from that which immediately follows. It is not "the Lord of Life," but "the Lord, and Life-Giver." "The Lord" here, as the equivalent of "Jehovah," is an assertion of the Deity of the Holy Spirit. See 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

**Who Proceedeth from the Father and the Son.**

See John xv. 26; xx. 22; Acts ii. 33. The words "and the Son" (Latin, *Filioque*) mark the great difference between Eastern and Western Christianity, the Eastern Church refusing to speak of any procession except the one definitely stated in the New Testament. A comparison, however, of our Lord's words in St. John xiv to xvi. will show that procession from the Son is clearly implied and involved.

**One Baptism for the Remission of Sins.**

An allusion to Acts ii. 38 and xxii. 16, though, of course, implying the need of repentance as well. "For" is the equivalent of the Greek *εἰς*, "with a view to."

## (III) THE ATHANASIAN CREED

**Whosoever will be Saved.**

That is, wills or intends to be saved, or in "a healthy state" as a Christian. Latin *Quicumque vult salvus esse*.

**Incomprehensible.**

The Latin word *immensus* has no reference to mental grasp, to which we now apply the term "incomprehensible." A better rendering would be "infinite," i.e. incapable of being measured.

**The Catholic Religion.**

The universally accepted religion of Christ as revealed in Scripture and enshrined in the Creeds.

## CHAPTER XII

CHIEF DOCTRINES OF THE CREED—  
GOD THE CREATOR

AT the conclusion of the Creed the Church Catechism asks the question, "What dost thou chiefly learn by these Articles of thy belief?" and the answer is given in words already quoted. These statements, although very brief, involve a great deal of Scripture truth concerning the Godhead, and also as to our relation to God in Christ. It is important therefore that we should try to realize something of what "we chiefly learn," i.e. something of the main doctrines of the Christian faith summarized in the Creed, leaving the full and detailed exposition of the meaning of Christianity to be gradually learned and experienced as time goes on. The following doctrines may perhaps be said to be those that we "chiefly learn in these Articles of our Belief," and each in turn claims our earnest attention.

1. God the Creator.
2. The Fatherhood of God.
3. The Godhead of Christ.
4. The Atonement.
5. Justification.
6. The Godhead of the Holy Ghost.
7. Sanctification.
8. Election.
9. The Holy Trinity.

## GOD THE CREATOR

Although the Creed is mainly intended to have a direct and practical relation to our spiritual life as Christians, it is inevitable that we should go on to inquire what are the precise grounds of our belief in God as the Maker of Heaven and earth. When we begin to think of God as the Supreme Being we naturally associate with Him the world around us. Now it should be at once clearly understood that it is impossible to prove the existence of God by mathematical demonstration, for if such proof were possible there would be no room for faith. Yet on the other hand, it is equally impossible to demonstrate the non-existence of a Creator. The existence of God, like many other necessary elements of our life, is something above and beyond mere mathematical proof and demonstration. If, however, we cannot demonstrate it we can adduce such strong proofs as will impel, if not compel, us to accept the fact of a First Cause which we Christians call God. These proofs, when carefully considered separately and together, afford the strongest possible grounds for believing in the existence of God, the probability amounting to the very highest moral certainty. We act every day and throughout life in a thousand ways on the basis of Probability, starting from the lowest possibility and reaching to the highest moral certainty, and our belief in the existence of God is of the latter description and is based upon several converging lines of evidence.

**1. The Fact of Creation.**—This is sometimes called the argument from causation. When we look around and consider the world we naturally ask whence it came and how it was made. Here is the effect: what is the cause? And as every effect must have its cause and every stream its source, we believe that the only true, adequate, and sufficient explanation of the world of nature is God as the Creator. This is what St. Paul meant when he said, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20), and it is because of this that the Bible commences by saying, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Three great facts of nature call for explanation. The existence of Matter, the existence of Motion, the existence of Life. As to Matter, it is impossible to believe that it has existed from eternity uncaused and uncreated. As to Motion, it must have had some original and primary impetus. As to Life, nothing but life can give life. All modern science goes to disprove the possibility of spontaneous generation. However far back we may trace the works of nature, and indeed the whole universe, we must arrive at length at the



point of time when creation took place, and for this creation the only satisfying explanation is "In the beginning God."

**2. The Signs of Purpose in Creation.**—There are manifest appearances of design in the world of nature which call for consideration and explanation. The solar system, with its fixed orbits and unchanging speeds, and distances calculated according to precise and exact mathematical laws, surely suggests the existence of mind and purpose. The great and universal law of gravitation, by which the whole framework of the universe is preserved in order, is another and striking instance of the same design. In like manner we can notice in Nature the adaptation of means to ends which seems to demand an intelligence behind and above everything. Attention has often been called to the glorious colours in nature, their number, variety, harmony, and their charm for man ; to the subtlety and power of the atmosphere and its wonderful adaptation to human needs ; the astonishing ingenuity shown in the fertilization of plants ; and the extraordinary instinct of animals. We may also study such parts of the human body as the eye and the hand for still further proofs of design and purpose and adaptation of means to ends. All these reveal remarkable adaptation of means to produce ends, and form a strong argument for design and purpose in nature, and therefore for a Designer, a Personal Mind ordering all.

**3. The Course of History.**—This line of proof is neither so patent nor so potent as the former two, because it demands a knowledge of human history for its full appreciation, but it is obvious almost to any ordinary observer that in the course of the ages there are marks of an over-ruling and controlling power, of gradual growths and combinations, and of a supernatural power at work in the rise and fall of kingdoms and tyrants, and in the progress of men and nations. This is especially the case in relation to the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Jewish nation the Saviour was prepared for the world, while among the other nations the world had been prepared for the Saviour, and at length, to use St. Paul's phrase, "in the fullness of time" Jesus Christ came. The state of the world, politically, socially, religiously, was such that His coming took place at the very time best fitted to bring about the spread of the Gospel and the extension of Christianity. The more human history, sacred and secular, is studied, the clearer will be the conviction that God has been marching through the centuries, and that only by His action and interposition can we account for many of the most wonderful events in human affairs.

**4. The Nature of Man.**—Perhaps this is the strongest and most convincing single line of evidence because it can be appreciated by all. There is the evidence afforded by man's intellectual nature ;

the idea of God may be said to be latent in the mind, and yet is not produced by it. The instant the thought of God as the First Cause is presented to the mind, it is understood and accepted as something quite natural and necessary. Yet no one would say that our mind originated the idea. Then there is the evidence of man's *will*; within certain limits man's will is free, but the very fact of the freedom side by side with the limitation argues for a greater Will than man's—a Supreme Will to which man is to be subject. Man's *conscience* is another evidence for God. Conscience implies law, and law demands a Lawgiver. Conscience is ever saying "I ought," which strictly and literally is "I owe it," and this implies the existence of Someone to whom we owe duty and obedience. Above all, man's *individuality* is an evidence for the existence of God. Man is conscious of possessing a personality, an ego, an existence distinct from all other beings. This fact of personality, together with the consciousness of other similar personalities in the world, is an argument for the existence of a Supreme Personality in Whom all human and finite personalities are unified and to Whom all are necessarily in subjection. The more, therefore, we examine our own nature the more we shall become convinced of the existence of God by reason of our natural limitations and personal needs. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Looking over the whole field of nature, therefore, we see unmistakable evidences of four great facts—Thought, Forethought, Law and Life. The existence of Thought necessarily involves the existence of a Thinker. The existence of Forethought necessarily implies an over-ruling Providence. The existence of Law necessarily demands a Lawgiver and Administrator. The existence of Life necessarily requires a Life-giver. Thus we rest our belief in the existence of God as the Creator of the world on these four separate, but converging and cumulative, lines of evidence.

It will have been noticed that the Creed, as a summary of elementary doctrine, states the fact of creation and our belief in it, without making any reference to the method of creation, for the simple reason that the latter idea is no necessary part of our faith and its profession. Into the great questions connected with the time and mode of creation, it is not the province of the Creed or of the present book to enter. The Bible is not a handbook of science, but a manual of religion and its great concern is to emphasize the reality of God as Creator and our personal relation to Him, leaving it for scientific knowledge through the ages to discover the secrets of nature and the methods of the Creator's working.

At the same time, it may be well to point out that the terms

Nature and Law, which are so often upon our lips, are only expressive of the method of creation, and do not touch the *fact* of a Creator. We may almost personify Nature and Law in popular language, if we will, but the need of a Creator still remains. The same thing is true of the use of the word Evolution. At the very most it only indicates a precise method of origination. It deals with the mode, not with the source, of creation. The idea of a gradual unfolding of the universe and the development of one or more primordial germs is a magnificent conception, but it does not set aside the need of a Creator. Evolution as a law of nature is undoubtedly true to a certain, and it may be a very great extent, but it is not yet proved to have been the universal law even of physical creation, to say nothing of mental, moral, and spiritual life. There are emotions, thoughts, acts of will, and other expressions of our personal and individual life which, at any rate up to the present, have never yet been expressed or found expressible in terms of evolution. There are as many gaps as links in the chain of argument by which many writers would urge on us the acceptance of evolution as the universal law of all life, and at present the theory can only be called a working hypothesis in the study of the methods of creation. But even if it should be proved the one and only method (a possibility which is extremely unlikely) there will still be as great need as ever of the truth enunciated in the first words of the Bible, "In the beginning God."

In the light of all the foregoing we can surely now see the practical bearing of the question learnt from our childhood, "What dost thou chiefly learn by these Articles of thy belief?" "First, I learn to believe in God the Father Who made me and all the world." We are thus taught to regard ourselves as a part of this great universe and at the same time to distinguish and separate our own individuality from the rest of creation ("made me"). Faith in God links our life very closely and intimately with the Maker of heaven and earth, and gives us the assurance of His goodness, wisdom, love, and power on our behalf.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

As we have already seen, the use of the term "Father" to describe God has three applications: (1) To our Lord (John i. 18). (2) To Christians (Rom. viii. 15; John i. 12). (3) To men in general,

because of the universal attitude of benevolence which God shows towards creatures made in His own image. On the first two aspects there is practically no difficulty, but as to the third it is very important to inquire what the Fatherhood of God really means.

1. **The Fatherhood of God is a Truth of Revelation.** It is not found in what is known as natural religion. In nature we find tokens of God's power, glory, and providence, but not strictly of His Fatherhood. Love, goodness, truth, providence are elements of Fatherhood, but they are not to be limited to that idea. We are therefore right in concluding that men could hardly have conceived of God as their Father apart from revelation, and as a matter of fact they did not do so, for a universal Fatherhood would have implied universal Brotherhood, an idea very repugnant to Greek and Roman minds. Even in the Old Testament the Fatherhood of God is only faintly indicated. In the well-known passage, "Like as a father pitieth his children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13), we have Fatherhood used as an illustration indicating similarity and not relationship, and dwelling on pity and fear instead of on love and fellowship. There are later indications of a nearer approach to New Testament teaching (Isa. lxiii. 16, and lxiv. 8), but even here the thought of Fatherhood is associated with God's Creatorship. When, however, we come to the New Testament the Fatherhood of God is perfectly clear, and in addition to the thoughts of awe and majesty we are taught God's nearness, love, and fellowship (Rom. viii. 15, 16; 1 John iii. 1).

2. We must now inquire very carefully into **the Meaning of this Fatherhood.** The Fatherhood of God can only be understood properly in the light of that human relationship with which we are familiar. Only therein is the proper sense and meaning of God's Fatherhood found. Of course, God's Fatherhood is not exactly the same as human parentage, yet the applications of it must be so related as to give a true idea of God as our Father. Now, the essence of Fatherhood is its relation to sonship and *vice-versa*; only in their mutual correspondence is there any intelligible idea. A father implies a son, and a son pre-supposes a father. This necessary relation between the two is always associated in the New Testament in every application of the term "Father" to God. If we speak of God's universal Fatherhood in creation, this is met exactly by the universal sonship of all men. If we speak of God's spiritual Fatherhood as possible to all who are willing to accept Christ as their Saviour, this is in turn met by the potential sonship of all who are thus contemplated. In like manner the actual spiritual Fatherhood of God to all believers is met by the actual spiritual sonship of all who have accepted Christ. We must ever



bear in mind this exact parallel of relationship ; God's Fatherhood and man's sonship are co-extensive, whatever be the precise applications of the terms.

If mere creation alone constituted God our Father, then of necessity the matter is settled, and all men are in the full sense His children. But our relation to God is much more than physical ; it is moral and spiritual, and this latter aspect is to be taken into account. When sin entered into the world it caused a profound change in man's attitude and spiritual relationship to God ; indeed, so far-reaching was the change, that our Lord and His Apostles could actually speak of two classes of men, children of God and children of the devil (John viii. 44 ; 1 John iii. 10). Hence, the New Testament view of true sonship to God is a spiritual relationship based on regeneration (John i. 12, and 1 John iii. 9), and adoption (Rom. viii. 15). Neither in the Gospels nor in the Epistles is there one unequivocal statement of any other Fatherhood of God than that of spiritual Fatherhood through union with Christ. The same may be said of the sonship of man. The only clear teaching is that which applies (and limits) human sonship to believers in Christ Jesus.

Even the parable of the prodigal son is not an exception to this statement. That parable is one of three in which the same attitude of God to man is taught under the figures of Shepherd, Woman, and Father in opposition to Pharisaic narrowness (Luke xv. 1, 2). Our Lord justified His love for the outcast under these three beautiful parables. Yet precisely the same truth would have been taught if God had been symbolized by a Husband. Of course, there is a spiritual fitness in the thought of God as our Father, but in this parable it is a figure and is not to be treated literally unless in the first and second parables, God is to be thought of as literally a Shepherd and a Woman. At any rate we must be careful about deducing profound spiritual and metaphysical dogmas from a figure of speech. If there are plainly expressed declarations elsewhere in the New Testament about a universal sonship (which we have seen there are not), this parable will illustrate and symbolize them, but from a parable alone we surely cannot prove or disprove a profound doctrine. That the parable makes no reference to the Atonement or the Holy Spirit is another proof of the impossibility of deducing full Christian doctrine from so symbolical a passage. We dare not take the parable and oppose it to everything else in the New Testament, but rather we must endeavour to interpret it in keeping with the rest of the New Testament. God as the Maker and Sustainer of man may be fitly likened to a Father, and as such may be called the Father of all men. In this sense all men are the sons of God.



The Apostles' Creed, in associating Fatherhood with creation, may seem to suggest this, or we may speak in a general way of God as Father, in view of His relation to men in Christ, yet here again man's potential sonship is an exact equivalent. For the full definite idea of Fatherhood we must limit the relationship to that spiritual connexion which only comes by union with Christ through the Spirit.

It is well to remember that Fatherhood is not the sole or exhaustive idea of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. He is also King, Lawgiver, and Master, and these elements of His relationship, whether interpreted through the Fatherhood, or the Fatherhood through them, are ever to be borne in mind. We can see this in the Apostle Peter's words, "If ye call upon a Father Who . . . judgeth" (1 Pet. i. 17). Holy Sovereignty is a cardinal and indispensable element of the Fatherhood of God. It is because He is our Father we can and must say, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

## CHAPTER XIV

### *THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST*

THE Creed expresses our belief as a belief, "In Jesus Christ our Lord, Who was conceived . . . Born . . . Suffered . . . Crucified . . . Rose . . . Ascended . . . He shall come." When, however, we come to express the meaning of our belief, the Catechism teaches us that we "believe in God the Son." What this implies we must now carefully consider.

1. The New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ **clearly involves His Godhead**. A careful consideration and comparison of the Gospels prove this.

(a) Consider His personal character as sinless. This is a unique fact in the history of the world. That One should appear in Whom the entail of sin is manifestly broken is a moral miracle, whether we think of His words, His behaviour, or His actions. The challenge put forth by our Lord Himself still holds good. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin" (John viii. 46).

(b) His claim on His own behalf is another unique fact. He claimed to be one with God (John x. 30); to have power to forgive sins (Mark ii. 10); to be the Judge of men (John v. 22, 27). These are prerogatives of God alone, and since Jesus Christ claimed them He must either be God or else be claiming what is false, in which case He would not be the perfect Man He is otherwise seen to be.

This is the dilemma to be faced ; either He is God or He is not good. There is no other alternative.

(c) His superhuman power points in the same direction. He worked what we call miracles, i.e. He brought about events that were different from the ordinary course of nature and transcend the usual natural order. He walked on the sea ; He fed multitudes ; He raised the dead. This could not have been done by mere human power.

(d) His acceptance of worship is a proof of His Divine position. He allowed men to worship Him (John ix. 38), an utter impossibility if He were only a man and not God.

Thus we are brought face to face with the **two sets of facts** as they are seen in the Gospels.

(1) A picture of One Who is evidently human.

(2) And yet of One Who is as evidently superhuman—Divine. On this personal revelation Apostolic Christianity was built, and consequently in the Acts and the Epistles the testimonies to the Godhead of Jesus Christ are clear and unmistakable. In the Acts He is always "The Lord."<sup>1</sup> In the Epistles He is united with God in the opening greetings and concluding benedictions, an absolute impossibility apart from Godhead. The power and glory associated with Jesus Christ in these writings can only be understood when we think of Him as God (Eph. i. 10 ; Col. i. 15-17).

2. This New Testament revelation of the Godhead of Christ thus received by the primitive Church gradually found **intellectual expression and theological statement** as the minds of Christian men were more and more brought to bear on the facts of redemption and their meaning. A personal experience will sooner or later need an intellectual expression, and that which is implicit in our spiritual relation to Christ will become explicit in our mental conception of Him as God and Man. Erroneous views on the part of non-Christians or partially instructed Christians were largely responsible for this intellectual expression of what otherwise might have remained in the inchoate and implicit form of the spiritual experience seen in the New Testament. The Christian Church was first of all led to a clear conception of, and an unhesitating belief in, our Lord as truly God. Then, later, He was declared to be Perfect Man. Still later the thought of the Church was concentrated on the unity of His Person as God and Man. Last of all came the concluding and complementary consideration of the essential distinction of the two Natures in one Personality. These four stages of thought are

<sup>1</sup> In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) this title was used to represent the name of Jehovah. E.g. compare Joel ii. 32 and Acts ii. 21.—A. M. S.

associated with four landmarks of early Church history, which we shall find it useful to remember, each having its own keyword of the particular truth emphasized—

(a) In 325, at the Council of Nicaea against the heresy of Arius, the Church testified to the *True* Godhead of our Lord.

(b) In 360, against the heresy of Apollinarius, the Church testified to the *Perfect* Manhood of our Lord.

(c) In 431, at the Council of Ephesus against the heresy of Nestorius, the Church testified to the *Unity* of Person in our Lord.

(d) In 451, at the Council of Chalcedon against the heresy of Eutyches, the Church testified to the *Distinction* of Natures in our Lord.

From that time forward the doctrine of the Church found clear and uniform expression in those Creeds which are our heritage to-day, the landmarks of a true theology, and the due and necessary expression in a theological and philosophical form of the spiritual facts and truths that lie implicit and unelaborated in the New Testament revelation, and in the spiritual experience of the early Church.

3. **The Belief of the Church of England** in the Deity of our Lord can now be seen from the clauses of the Creeds, already quoted above and from the following statement of Article II—

“The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man.”

We have here a careful and definite statement of the two sides of this great and mysterious subject—

(a) Our Lord's Divine Nature.

(b) Our Lord's Incarnation.

(a) “The Son” and “The Word” are complementary titles. The first guards the distinct Personality of the Son, the other guards His essential oneness with the Father. The phrase “begotten from everlasting of the Father” is an attempt to express in human language what is really incapable of full understanding and therefore of full expression, namely, the priority in Order of the Father in relation to the Son, and the equality of the Nature of the Son in relation to the Father. While the Father is thus prior in Order, He is not superior in Nature, and thus, however incompletely we are able to express it, we endeavour to provide for the two sides of the New Testament teaching on the Divine relations of the Father and the Son.

(b) In our belief in the Incarnation we confess our faith that our Lord assumed a true human nature of the Virgin Mary ; that thus He had two natures Divine and human, whole and perfect ; that these two are eternally united in One Person ; and that the result is one Christ, both God and Man. It was a human nature, not a human person, that the Son of God took into union with Himself. By human nature we mean all those qualities which the race has in common. By a human person we mean a separate individual possessing that distinct power known as personality. Adam did not transmit his personality, which is incommunicable, but his nature. Personality is therefore to be distinguished from nature, and human nature is organized on a new personality in each individual. Yet the distinction between Nature and Person must not be pressed too far. Our knowledge of personality and psychology generally is far too small for us to fathom the mystery of two Natures in one Personality. In some way our Lord's human Nature seems to have been impersonal and taken up into the personality of the Word, and the differences between His Humanity and ours (namely, that He had no human father, no human personality, no sin) do not touch the integrity and perfection of His human Nature.

The conjunction of Natures is so close that we can attribute to the one Person what is really only strictly appropriate to one Nature of the two ; as for example, when we read of " the Blood of God " (Acts xx. 28) ; " the Son of Man which is in heaven " (John iii. 13) ; " Crucified the Lord of Glory " (1 Cor. ii. 8).

A careful study of the three Creeds and Article II will give to us the doctrinal statements about the Godhead of our Lord which the Church of England accepts and teaches in accordance with the Word of God.

A few words are necessary on the subject of the **miraculous Birth of our Lord**. The right way to consider this question is first to concentrate attention on the picture of Christ as seen in the Manhood and earthly ministry recorded in the Gospels. Here we have the story of One Who is both sinless and miraculous. How is this to be accounted for ? If His life is thus unique, surely it is not difficult to realize that His entrance into this world must have been unique also. A manifestation of God Incarnate must have had an adequate and worthy beginning, and so in accordance with this, St. Matthew and St. Luke give us the account of His miraculous Birth from a Virgin, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the adequate cause of so manifest an effect. There is no other way of accounting for it, and this has been the only view of the Church in all ages.



## CHAPTER XV

*THE ATONEMENT*

THE Creeds testify to our belief in the fact of the Death of Christ, and necessarily do not state or explain its meaning, but when we turn to the teaching of the Catechism as to the meaning of the Creed we are at once reminded of the purpose of our Lord's Death. "Who hath redeemed me and all mankind." It was "for us men, and for our salvation," that our Lord came into this world and died. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of a clear understanding of the various truths connected with our Lord's Death.

1. Let us consider **the Need of His Death**. The thought of redemption calls up the idea of slavery, bondage, thralldom, and we are at once face to face with the awful fact of sin, its nature, and effects. The entrance of sin into this world has affected man's relation to God and also his own nature. Sin is the transgression of the law, or more literally, sin is "lawlessness," the entire absence of man's submission to the Divine law which constitutes our true life. In this condition of lawlessness expressed in actual transgression many consequences are involved.

(a) Sin affects our relation to God. It brings man into a state of guilt before God. It also involves man in the Divine condemnation of sin, and further, it issues in man's entire separation from God. We can see all this in the story of the first sin (Gen. iii.), where these three results of guilt, condemnation, and separation are clearly brought before us.

(b) Sin also affects all the powers of man's nature. It results in the darkening of the intellect, the deadening of conscience, the defilement of the heart, and the distortion of the will. Sin also hurts man's relation to his fellows, causing animosity, hatred, malice, and other sins against love. Lastly, sin issues in death, the separation of soul and body from God for evermore. It is evident, therefore, that if man is to regain his true position before God, and also to recover the true equilibrium of his nature, sin must be dealt with and put away. God's relation to this world is one of righteousness, and as this relation has been set at nought by human sin, God's broken law must be honoured, His righteous character vindicated, and man's position and nature restored. This great need is involved and expressed in the thought of an Atonement.

2. **The Provision of an Atonement.** As Atonement is intended to cover man's relation to God, to himself, and to his fellows, we can readily see that man himself has no power to provide that



which will meet the demands of God's righteousness and fulfil His Divine and perfect requirements. Only by a perfect obedience could any man fulfil God's will, an obedience that must be perfect in thought, intent, and motive, as well as in word and action ; but this is manifestly impossible with our sinful nature. " He that offends in one point is guilty of all " (Jas. ii. 10). " Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them " (Gal. iii. 10). Moreover, the chasm between man and God by reason of sin, is so wide that man alone and unaided cannot span the gulf and get back to God. A Mediator is needed, One Who is both God and Man, and Who is also free from sin. Job's cry, " Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both " (Job ix. 33) is the cry of humanity in all ages, and indicates man's deepest need.

It is the glory of Christianity that it records the wonderful plan by which God met that need in the Person and Work of His dear Son. " He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor : therefore His arm brought salvation " (Isa. lix. 16) ; and " Now the righteousness of God . . . is manifested . . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus " (Rom. iii. 21-24). And the message of the Gospel to every man in the world is, " There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus " (1 Tim. ii. 5).

3. **The Meaning of the Atonement** needs our careful thought. The simplest statement of this truth is perhaps found in the words, " Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Pet. iii. 18), and " Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by Whose stripes ye were healed " (1 Pet. ii. 24). Our Church in Article II thus states the great meaning of " Who redeemed me and all mankind."

" Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a Sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."

Thus the Person Who suffered on the Cross is the Son of God, Who His own self bare our sins (see Isa. liii. 6), but the Nature in which He suffered is His human Nature.

In order that we may understand the New Testament teaching of the Death of Christ it is best to start by collecting the various passages, noting particularly the following words used—

(a) "Ransom" (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6). Scripture is silent as to whom the ransom was paid, and only calls attention to its infinite worth.

(b) "Propitiation" (1 John ii. 2). The removal by Sacrifice of God's judicial displeasure caused by sin.

(c) "Reconciliation" (Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. ii. 16-18). The removal of the separation and enmity caused by sin, and the restoration of man to fellowship with God.

(d) "Redemption" (Eph. i. 7). Deliverance from bondage and thralldom.

(e) Three prepositions, by which it is stated that Christ died "on behalf of," *ὕπέρ* (2 Cor. v. 14, 15); "with reference to" *περί*, (Matt. xxvi. 28); and "instead of" us, *ἀντί*, (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6).

After obtaining the New Testament view of the Atonement very much light is thrown on the subject by a careful consideration of the Old Testament sacrifices, especially those in Genesis, that of the Passover, and the various sacrifices and offerings of the Levitical law. Thus, by careful induction from all the Scripture teaching we can arrive at a clear idea of the meaning of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ. At the same time, we must ever distinguish between fact and theory. The Cross is like a diamond with several facets, each of which is necessary to the full beauty of the whole. The fundamental thought of the Atonement is reconciliation between God and man by means of a propitiation, this propitiation being the sacrificial offering of the Death of Christ. When reconciliation is brought before us in the New Testament it seems to emphasize mainly man's side, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20), but this presupposes an already existing reconciliation of God to man by the Death of Christ. When we read of "the wrath of God" we feel sure that it must have some real meaning and application, teaching us of God's judicial displeasure against sin, and telling us in unmistakable language that sin is that abominable thing which He hates (Jer. xlv. 4). Propitiation implies one who propitiates and one who is propitiated. In this case it must be evident that God is the One Who is propitiated. The publican in his prayer said, "God, be propitious to me a sinner." Even forgiveness implies that God's attitude to man before and after forgiveness cannot be the same, and that therefore the Atonement has a Divine as well as a human side. What we mean, in a word, by the Cross of Christ is that the Death of our Lord made it, and still makes it, possible for God to forgive sin. It liberated His love (which sin had held back) while maintaining His righteousness. There is no opposition between the Father and the Son; it was God Who required the Atonement and God Who provided it. What His justice demanded

His love provided, for "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," and now in the Death of Christ God is at once "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

4. In connexion with this great and wonderful truth let us note two things—

(1) The real nature of sin. It is only in the Cross that we can truly understand the nature, power, and awful results of sin. Sin cannot be anything superficial, since it caused the Death of the Son of God. Had there been any other way to remove sin we may be sure that God would have brought it about without having to sacrifice His own Son for human redemption.

(2) The Atoning Sacrifice of Christ is the essential truth of the Bible. We must ever be careful to make the Atonement the centre of all our thought, life, and hope. The Incarnation of our Lord can never be considered apart from His Death, for the Incarnation is not a separate interest, but includes the whole of the earthly manifestation from Bethlehem to Olivet, from the Birth to the Ascension. Not Bethlehem, but Calvary, is the centre of gravity in the New Testament. Whether or not we can fully understand all the various aspects of truth connected with the Death of Christ, we can bow in adoration before God and say of His Beloved Son, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

## CHAPTER XVI <sup>1</sup>

### JUSTIFICATION

WE have seen something of what the Sacrifice of our Lord means as a spiritual fact; we must now inquire carefully how that fact may be applied to individual life. It is not enough that our Lord's Death occurred in history; it must also become part of our personal experience, in order that it may be a spiritual force in our life. This application of the Atonement is the subject of our present chapter, to which the name of "Justification" has been given, and we shall thus be enabled to see in what way the words of the Catechism come true, "Who redeemed *me*." It is necessary to study Article XI for the teaching of the Church of England on the application of redemption to the soul. We shall thereby see that the teaching of Article XI is the application and complement of

<sup>1</sup> The substance of the chapter has already appeared in *Foundation Truths of the Gospel* (Morgan & Scott).

the teaching of Article II. The Atonement is the Divine side, Justification the human side of redemption.

Justification is connected with the one question which, beyond all others, has been exercising the mind and conscience of mankind in all ages : " How shall man be just with God ? " It is found as far back as the time of Job, where we have it asked no fewer than four times (iv. 17 ; ix. 2 ; xv. 14 ; xxv. 4). It pressed upon earnest Israelites from time to time (Ps. cxliii. 2 ; Mic. vi. 6), and is implied in the whole ritual of the Mosaic law. It is involved in heathen temples, altars, and sacrifices, and appears in one form or another in all the Oriental religions. There can be no doubt that it is the question of questions for man, and must be settled definitely and permanently, if there is to be real peace, power, and progress in our life.

It is, of course, in the Bible alone that we find any solution of the problem. The first hint comes in Gen. xv. 1-4 ; a little more light is granted in Ps. xxxii. 1, 2 ; and Hab. ii. 4 ; but the full revelation is found in Acts xiii. 38, 39 ; Gal. iii., and especially Rom. iii. and iv. From all this we see that God alone can give the answer to man's inquiry, and to His Divine Word we must turn if we would know and enjoy the glorious Gospel of man's full Justification by God.

**1. The Meaning of Justification.**—The word and the thing may be viewed from God's standpoint, or from man's. In the former instance it means the Divine act and gift ; in the latter, the human reception and result."

Let us be very clear that *Justification is connected with our true relation to God*. It is concerned with our spiritual relation to God, not with our spiritual condition of soul in the sight of God. Justification has to do with our judicial position, not with our actual state. The results of sin in our nature follow from this, but these will come before us later. Confusion and difficulty will assuredly arise if we are not perfectly clear on this point. Man's life needs first and foremost a true position before God, a right relation, and this alone is the truth connected with Justification.

This true relation *was forfeited by sin*. Sin is self-assertion, disobedience, rebellion ; and in regard to Adam's true relation to God there were three results of his sin : (a) A sense of guilt (Gen. iii. 8) ; (b) A sentence of condemnation (Gen. iii. 16-19) ; (c) An act of separation (Gen. iii. 23). Thus the true relation of man to God was forfeited, and these results abide to-day, and apply to all mankind apart from God.

Now justification is connected with *the restoration of this true relation to God*. It includes (a) The removal of Condemnation by



the bestowal of Forgiveness; (b) The removal of Guilt by the reckoning (or imputation) of Righteousness; (c) The removal of Separation by the restoration of Fellowship.

Justification, then, means the re-instatement of man in his original relation to God. It means to treat him as righteous in the sight of God, to account him righteous, to regard him as righteous, to declare him righteous. It means that man is accepted as righteous in the eyes of the law, and restored to a true position before God.

Justification is, therefore, much more than pardon, and the two must never be confused, much less identified. Forgiveness is only part of Justification, and to identify them is to cause spiritual trouble and loss. We can see the two distinguished in Acts xiii. 38, 39, and in Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. A criminal may be pardoned, but he cannot be regarded as though he had never broken the law. Forgiveness is only negative, the removal of the condemnation. Justification is also positive, the removal of *guilt*, and the bestowal of a perfect standing before God. Forgiveness is an act, and a succession of isolated acts from time to time. Justification is an act which results in a permanent relation or position in the sight of God. Forgiveness is repeated throughout our life. Justification is complete and never repeated, and since it refers to our spiritual position before God, it covers the whole of our life, past, present, and future. We can see the distinction in our Lord's words, "He that has been *bathed* (justification) needeth not save to *wash his feet* (forgiveness)" (John xiii. 10). He that has once had the bath of a perfect Justification needs only the daily cleansing of the soul through forgiveness, not a fresh Justification.

Justification is also different from *making* righteous, which, as we shall see hereafter, is Sanctification. The two are always inseparable in *fact*, but they are assuredly distinguishable in *thought*, and must ever be distinguished if we would have peace and blessing. Justification concerns our standing, Sanctification our state. The former affects our position, the latter our condition. The first deals with judicial relationship, the second with spiritual fellowship. We must ever remember that they are bestowed together, that is, a complete Justification and a commencing Sanctification; "where the righteousness of Christ adheres, the grace of Christ inheres"; where the one is imputed, the other is imparted; where the one is reckoned, the other is received. *But they must never be confused.* The first is the foundation of our peace—"Christ for us." The second is the basis of our purity—"Christ in us." Justification is concerned with acceptance; Sanctification with attainment. Sanctification admits of degrees; we may be more or less sancti-

fied. Justification has no degrees, but is complete, perfect, final. "Justified from *all* things" (Acts xiii. 39).

2. **The Foundation of Justification.**—"We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ." So runs the Eleventh Article of our Church in harmony with Holy Scripture. "In Him . . . justified" (Acts xiii. 39). The "merit" of Christ means the value of His whole Person and Work. His perfect obedience even unto death, His spotless righteousness, His payment of the penalty due to our transgression—all this forms the one sole ground of our Justification. This is reckoned to us, put to our credit, and God looks at us in Him. "He Who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21.) By Him we are pardoned, and in Him we are regarded as righteous.

For the merit of Christ, therefore, we are justified, "and not for our own work or deservings" (Article XI). Our works or merits could not bring about our Justification. Perfect obedience is required by God, and this man cannot render. "Whosoever shall offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10). "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). And yet, notwithstanding this, man has ever been attempting to work out and establish his own righteousness. We see this in human sacrifices, ceremonies, penances, offerings, and it is true even of the Jews, who, it might be supposed, would have been instructed sufficiently to avoid this rock of danger and trouble. But as with the heathen, so with the Jews, the attempt was made to establish their own righteousness, and the explanation in the latter case is that they "would not submit themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3). Man fell by a desire to be independent of God, and now man wishes to be equally independent of God in returning to Him. Universal failure has been the sad result, because of the twofold inability to cancel the past and to guarantee the future. God has therefore concluded all under sin; "all have sinned, and are coming short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23); and man, if he is to be justified, must come as a sinner helpless and hopeless, willing to accept, and not wishful to merit the mercy and favour of God.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

3. **The Means of Justification.**—The merit of our Lord becomes ours "by faith" (Article XI). "All that believe are justified." Trust implies our dependence on some one else, and the consequent cessation of dependence on ourselves. Faith is, therefore, at once

the acknowledgment of our own inability and the admission of our need of some one else's ability. Faith links us to Christ, and is the means of our appropriation of His merit.

The reason why Faith is emphasized in Justification is that it is the only possible answer to God's revelation. Faith in man answers to grace in God. Faith is the correlative of Promise. Trust responds to Truth. Faith renounces self and receives the Saviour. There is, consequently, no merit in faith ; it is only the instrument, not the ground, of Justification. As our great Church teacher, Hooker, says, " God doth justify the believing man, not for the worthiness of his belief, but for His worthiness Who is believed " ; or, as we may put it, we are not justified by faith, but by Christ through faith. Faith is nothing apart from its Object, and it is only of use as it leads us directly to Him Who has wrought a perfect Righteousness, and as it enables us to appropriate Him as " The Lord our Righteousness."

**4. The Value of Justification.**—This doctrine of the sinner's Justification by Christ through Faith is a necessity for spiritual health.

(a) It is the foundation of peace. The soul looks backward, outward, inward, upward, onward, and says, " Justified from all things," and " being justified by faith we have peace " (Rom. v. 1), immediate, certain, complete, and everlasting.

(b) It is also the foundation of Christian liberty. It removes the bondage of sin, sets the prisoner free, introduces him directly to the presence of God, and gives him free, full, constant access to the Holiest.

This doctrine is also a necessity for spiritual power.

(a) It is the foundation of holiness. The soul is introduced into the immediate presence of God ; realizes the spiritual presence of Christ ; receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit ; and in all this finds the secret and guarantee of purity of heart and life. The great passage in Rom. v. 1-11 shows us Justification as the commencement of a long chain of graces and blessings which culminate in glory above.

(b) It is also the spring and blessed secret of all true Christian service. It releases the soul from anxiety about itself, and frees it for anxiety about others. The " heart at leisure from itself " can set forward the salvation of those around. Firm on the rock itself, it can " stretch out a loving hand to wrestlers with the troubled sea." Well may Article XI speak of this doctrine as " wholesome and very full of comfort " ; that is, *healthful* and *helpful*, for so it assuredly is to all who receive and welcome it.

Let us therefore hold fast to this great foundation fact of Justifica-

tion. Let us study our Bible to gain and grasp a clear view of its meaning, and then yielding ourselves to its blessed power and joy, let us make it prominent in our life, teaching, and work, as the secret of spiritual life, power, peace and liberty.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *THE GODHEAD OF THE HOLY GHOST*

THE third part of the Creed is connected with our belief in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and the Giver of Life. The order in which God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are placed in the Creed is worthy of notice. God the Father naturally comes first as the Creator and First Cause of all things. Then God the Son, by Whom the Father is revealed to man for the purpose of redemption. Then God the Holy Ghost, Whose province it is to make God real to the life of man by revealing Jesus Christ as Saviour, and abiding as an indwelling presence, blessing everyone who will receive Him.

1. Let us consider **the New Testament teaching about the Holy Spirit.** We can see clearly from the story of St. Luke the place and power of the Holy Spirit at the time of our Lord's Birth. The message to the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 35) and the story of Simeon (Luke ii. 25-27) clearly show that some supernatural and Divine presence and power are to be understood here. During our Lord's earthly ministry there was scarcely need of any prominence being given to the Holy Spirit in Person, and so it was only as our Lord was departing that He began to teach fully about the "other Comforter," the Holy Spirit.

(a) In His farewell discourses (John xiv-xvi) we can see the prominence given to the Holy Spirit. He is called the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. He is said to come from God, and His work is to teach, to reveal, to declare things to come, to convince the world of sin, and to glorify Christ. These are all clear and unmistakable testimonies to the Personality of the Holy Spirit.

(b) In our Lord's great commission (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20) the Holy Spirit is placed on an equality with the Father and the Son into Whom men are to be baptized.

(c) In the Apostolic Church the presence of the Holy Spirit controlling and guiding the Church is undoubted. It was against the Holy Spirit, and therefore against God, that Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts v. 3, 4), and in all the life of the Church it is the Holy



Spirit Who guides, directs, and rules (Acts viii. 29; xiii. 2, 4; xvi. 6, 7).

(d) In the Epistles we are again reminded of the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistle to the Galatians, to take one instance only, everything in the Christian life is ascribed to the Holy Spirit from first to last (iii. 2-5); and, above all, in the Apostolic Benediction the Holy Spirit is again placed on a level with the Father and the Son (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

All this carries its own clear meaning and message, calling attention to the essential Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit.

2. In keeping with this teaching of Holy Scripture the Church has always declared its belief in **the Holy Ghost as God**, and, as we have already seen, everything of grace and blessing experienced in the Church and in the individual flows from the gift of the Holy Ghost. In our Collects, in our Baptismal Service, and indeed throughout the whole Prayer-book, whether with reference to doctrine, or devotion, or duty, the Godhead of the Holy Spirit is made clear and prominent. It is, indeed, impossible to make too prominent the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, because it is His peculiar prerogative to make Christ real and God powerful to the soul. We shall always be in line with the New Testament and the spiritual experience of the best ages of the Church if we take care to honour the Holy Ghost in all our thought, life, and service.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SANCTIFICATION

"I LEARN to believe in God the Holy Ghost Who sanctifieth me." As the work of Justification, or accounting righteous, is specifically associated with our Lord Jesus Christ and His Atoning Sacrifice, so the work of Sanctification, or making righteous, is associated with the Holy Spirit. These two aspects of truth are often distinguished as "Christ for us" and "Christ in us," and it is the province and prerogative of the Holy Spirit to make Christ real to us, both as the Saviour from sin and the indwelling Fount of Righteousness.

If an average congregation, or perhaps even many a Bible class, were asked, "Why did Jesus Christ die?" the answer would probably often be, "He died for our sins, in our stead." This reply would be true; but assuredly not all the truth. If we study very carefully such passages as 2 Cor. v. 15; Eph. v. 25; Titus ii. 14,

we shall see that "for our sins" means, at least, three things. It includes salvation from the penalty of sin, salvation from the power of sin, and salvation from the presence of sin. Salvation concerns the past, the present, and the future; and its elements are often distinguished as Justification, Sanctification, Glorification. These three great truths are illustrated for us by three phrases: **in Christ, like Christ, with Christ** (cf. Acts xxvi. 18, where all three truths are found).

We now have to look at the second of these, remembering the teaching of 1 Thess. iv. 3: "This is the will of GOD, even your Sanctification."

**1. The Meaning of Sanctification.**—Sanctification is a familiar word involving two great truths—

(a) **Consecration**, or a true relation to GOD. The root idea of the Hebrew and Greek words for "holy," "sanctify," and their cognates is "separation." We read of places, as well as persons, being "holy" or "sanctified" where the meaning can only be "separation," in the sense of being set apart from other things for GOD's possession and use. The dedication of the priests of the Old Testament suggests the same idea. We may consider, too, the use of the word as applied to our Lord in St. John xvii. 19: "I sanctify Myself," meaning "I consecrate Myself." It should therefore be ever remembered as one of the foundations of our life and experience that the root idea of Sanctification is Consecration. We are redeemed in order to be set apart, dedicated, consecrated, "kept for the Master's use."

(b) **Purification**, or a true condition before GOD. This follows naturally as a necessary consequence of the preceding truth. To be used when set apart involves and demands fitness. "Sanctified . . . meet . . . prepared" (2 Tim. ii. 21). When GOD possesses us we are possessed by His Presence, and the Holy Spirit cannot be in us without purifying our thoughts, desires, and motives, and so equipping us for His service.

**2. The Method of Sanctification.**—To this question there are two answers, according to which aspect we consider.

(a) **The Divine side.** We read that "Christ is made unto us Sanctification" (1 Cor. i. 30), and "Sanctified in Christ" (1 Cor. i. 2). The one Divine gift to us is the Person of Christ, Who is, from different standpoints, our Justification and our Sanctification. He is our Sanctification; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier; and we are the sanctified. The possession of Christ as our Salvation and Sanctification is made real to us by the Holy Ghost, Who glorifies Christ to our souls according as we need Him (John xvi. 14).

(b) **The Human side.** The Holy Ghost does His work through

the Word of God. " Sanctified by the Word of God and prayer " (1 Tim. iv. 5 ; John xvii. 17, 19). The truth of God is the great instrument used by the Spirit. Associated with, and arising out of this is faith, which appropriates Christ for Sanctification just as it did for Justification. " Sanctified BY FAITH " (Acts xxvi. 18). We may consider also the force of " as " and " so " in Col. ii. 6. How did we receive Christ ? By faith. " Even so " walk—by faith. As there are four factors at conversion, so there are four in the Christian life—the Lord, the Spirit, the Word, and Faith. Faith as a definite act receives Christ for Justification. Faith as a constant attitude appropriates Christ for Sanctification. And the Holy Spirit assures us of the one and effects in us the other. The Lord provides for us a new status, and also a new nature, and these two together sum up the great meaning of Righteousness—Righteousness at once imputed and imparted. This holy nature is a gift bestowed on us by the Spirit, accepted by faith, and maintained by faith.

An error to be guarded against constantly is that of practically assuming that Christ is to be accepted by faith, and that then the new life is to be maintained only by our own fighting against sin, as if only pardon came by the Saviour's free gift, and that purification comes by the believer's constant struggling. This is not the case, for we have justification and sanctification in the one Lord, and both are to be appropriated and continuously enjoyed by faith. Of course, there is fighting in the Christian life, but it is " the good fight of faith " (1 Tim. vi. 12), and there is work, but it is " the work of faith " (1 Thess. i. 3 ; 2 Thess. i. 11). Our effort, however, is not to obtain, but to maintain and retain what Christ has obtained for us, and has bestowed on us by the Spirit. Holiness is not an achievement to be accomplished, but a gift to be accepted ; and in the acceptance, appropriation, enjoyment, and use of the gift will be found our growing Sanctification.<sup>1</sup> Christ is all—pardon-ing, justifying, sanctifying ; and faith is surrendering, yielding, dedicating, receiving, trusting, using, obeying in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian life from the first to last is the Christlife and a life of faith (Gal. ii. 20).

**3. The Maintenance of Sanctification.**—When Sanctification is realized as the will of God for the believer (1 Thess. iv. 3), and its meaning fully understood, the question at once arises, How can this will of God be done, how can the life of Sanctification be lived ?

<sup>1</sup> While it is true that holiness of status on the part of those who belong to Christ is a gift to be accepted by faith, corresponding holiness of character and conduct then becomes something to be worked out by us in the obedience of faith by the power of the Spirit, who now worketh in us (see Phil. ii. 12, 13).  
—A. M. S.

The answer, at once fundamental and inclusive, is, By the constant realization of our true and abiding relation to God and our position before Him, as not only redeemed *from* sin, but also redeemed *for* God's possession and service (Titus ii. 14, R.V.). The secret of blessing in the spiritual life is to realize that this is our position and to act accordingly. Again, we must consider this in its twofold aspect—

(a) **The Divine Requirement—Consecration to Christ as Lord.**—We can see this very clearly in Rom. xiv. 9. Let us face it carefully and definitely. "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord." "That He might be Lord" of our lives, Master of our entire existence. The "absolute monarchy" of Jesus Christ is the one condition of genuine Christian living. We find the same in Col. i. 18. "He is the Head . . . that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Consider also 1 Pet. iv. 11: "That God in all things may be glorified." Note, too, St. Paul's most frequent and fullest title for our Saviour: "The Lord Jesus Christ," or "Jesus Christ our Lord." We must settle it once for all and then realize it continuously, "We are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8).

The Old Testament affords unmistakable illustrations of this great truth. We remember that Israel was a redeemed people, delivered out of Egypt; but delivered from Egypt in order to belong to God for ever. They were "brought out" and then "brought in," saved in order to serve. We notice in Leviticus (chap. i.) that the first offering named is the Burnt Offering, and as this offering means primarily not Propitiation but Consecration, it is sometimes wondered why we have it first of all, instead of the Sin Offering. But we must always remember that the five offerings were all for the people of God—for believers, and not for the unconverted. The people of Israel were already God's people on the basis of the Passover Sacrifice of Redemption, and when this is realized the place and meaning of the Burnt Offering become clear. It is the logical, immediate, and necessary outcome of a redeemed position, and just as the offering was entirely consumed by fire, so was their life to be wholly the Lord's. We have the New Testament counterpart of all this in exact and beautiful sequence in the Epistle to the Romans. In chapter iii we see the great Propitiation whereby we are brought nigh to God, forgiven, justified. Then in chapter xii comes the Burnt Offering, "the Living Sacrifice," which is our "logical" (λογική) service. It is the "logical" outcome of those "mercies of God" by which we are redeemed (vv. 1, 2).

Another notable illustration of this truth is found in the story of Joshua (v. 13-15). Let us consider the circumstances. Israel



had been redeemed ; and after the long wanderings and backsliding of the wilderness-life was again in covenant with God (Josh. v. 2-11). The ordinances of the Covenant being once more fulfilled, and the old position once more resumed, what was now needed ? A new revelation ; a new and distinct lesson ; a fresh and definite step. What was this ? Not the revelation of God as Redeemer ; they had that in Egypt. Not the revelation of God as Teacher ; they had that at Sinai. What was really required was the revelation of God as Lord and Master. "As Captain of the Lord's host am I now come." He had come, not merely to assist Israel against the Canaanites, not simply to second Joshua's efforts, but in order *to take charge, to assume full command*, to be Captain, Master, Lord.

The practical power of this truth is only too evident. It is the secret of peace in Christian experience, and of ever-increasing peace, in proportion as the Lordship of Christ is realized. We can see this in Isa. ix. 7 : first "government," then "peace." Let the Government be "upon His shoulder," and peace will be the immediate and constant result. It is also the source of power. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine," and in the absolute monarchy of Jesus Christ is the secret of power for character and conduct. Into every part of our life, inward and outward, this Lordship of Christ will be found to enter, and entering, will be the guarantee of blessing.

Consecration, then, is the Divine Requirement—absolute, imperative, universal. Consider, now—

(b) **The Human Response—Dedication and Daily Abiding.**—All God's revelation is conditioned upon human acceptance for full realization and enjoyment. This is so at every stage. Christ is only realized as Saviour by the acceptance of faith, and in the aspect now before us it is necessary for us to respond to the claim of God upon our lives. The first part of the response may be expressed by the word "Remember." We must be clear intellectually as to what Salvation means. We were slaves of Satan and sin. We are redeemed by the Blood of Christ. These are facts undeniable and unalterable. But what then ? We belong to Him Who has paid the price. We are His property, His possession. He is our Saviour and then our Lord, our Master, our Disposer. Let us realize this, and face it in its definiteness, certainty, blessedness.

Then from this consciousness of what is required we come to the second step, which may be expressed by the word "Surrender." In Rom. vi. we have it in the word "Yield." We are called first to "yield *ourselves* unto God" (verse 13), and as a consequence, to "yield our members as weapons of righteousness for God," and as "slaves to righteousness with a view to holiness" (verse 19). The same attitude (with the word) is found in Rom. xii. 2 : "Present."

It denotes one definite act of surrender, presentation, committal of ourselves to God as those who are His, and who wish to show that this is so in daily experience. Have we thus deliberately yielded, presented ourselves? Let us settle this now.

The third stage of our response is found in the word "Abide." This means the maintenance of our realized position of surrender, the act becoming an attitude, the initial presentation being continued in a constant, habitual attitude of full surrender and dedication. This "abiding" is maintained by means of three conditions—

(1) By abiding in God's Love through trust (John xv. 9).

(2) By abiding in God's Word through meditation (John viii. 31; Col. i. 23; Jas. i. 25).

(3) By abiding in God's Grace through prayer (Acts xiii. 43; Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2).

"And now little children, abide in Him" (1 John ii. 28). Stay where you are! "Abide in the calling." Never draw back, never retreat, let God's fact of consecration become a constant factor by means of a life of dedication. Let "Thou art Mine" be met by "I am Thine": let "Thou art my God" be responded to by "I am Thy servant" (Ps. cxliii. 10, 12), and then we shall learn the secret and enjoy the blessedness of the only true Christian life. If we thus "admit" Christ as Lord, "submit" to Him in everything, "commit" everything to Him, and "permit" Him to be everything and to do all His will in us, then shall we indeed "transmit" His life and grace to others, and—

"All our powers with all their might,  
In His sole glory shall unite."

## CHAPTER XIX

### ELECTION

IF we again read carefully the words of the Catechism which answer the question, "What dost thou chiefly learn by these Articles of thy Belief?" we shall see that they make reference to three gradually narrowing circles of people—

(a) "All the world."

(b) "All mankind."

(c) "All the elect people of God."

The first includes all created things; the second includes all human beings; the third narrows the circle down to those who are the subjects of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The Cate-

chism thus teaches that the work of the Holy Spirit applies not only to the individual Christian ("me"), but to "all the elect people of God," i.e. all the members of the Body of Christ, all true Christians, those of whom the one true spiritual Church is composed, those who are in spiritual union with Christ, who are "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." It is noteworthy, however, that the Catechism does not simply speak of "all the people of God," but of "all the *elect* people of God," and in so doing is not using an unnecessary word, but one that is instinct with living reality in the light of Scripture teaching. The child who is taught the Catechism is thus taught to regard himself as included in a great body of people called "the elect people of God," and we must now consider the meaning and power of this statement by a careful study of the Scripture doctrine of Election.

1. **We shall best approach** this mysterious and difficult, yet undoubtedly Scriptural and most precious subject, by having before us one of the numerous passages of Scripture which deal with it. Let us look at Eph. i. 4-6a. In the whole passage, from verses 4-14, the blessings of the Gospel are associated with—

- (1) The eternal purpose of the Father (verses 4-6a).
- (2) The historical revelation of the Son (verses 6b-12).
- (3) The personal gift of the Holy Spirit (verses 13, 14).

Election is therefore connected with the first of these, the eternal purpose of God regarding the Church of Christ. The Church, i.e. "the blessed company of all faithful people," was the subject of God's electing love and predestinating purpose, which manifested itself in due time in the Person and Work of Christ, and was subsequently applied personally to individual lives by the Holy Spirit, so that now every Christian can say, This wondrous redemption is by the Holy Spirit bestowed on "me and all the elect people of God."

It will be helpful to remember that the idea of God's eternal purpose, exercised in choice or selection is not confined to Christianity or even religion. It must never be forgotten that however difficult and mysterious the question is, it is not a Christian or a religious difficulty only, but one which is involved in the very constitution of the universe. The difficulty would be found just as acute, if not more acute, if Christianity did not exist. Election is seen in the course of history. Why was Israel chosen out of the nations to be God's special witness to the world? Why was the younger son, Jacob, chosen, and not Esau? Why was Ephraim chosen, and not Manasseh? Why Joseph and not Reuben? Why Isaac and not Ishmael? Why Seth and not Cain? These are but

a few instances of this great law of the universe, the supremacy of the will of God. The same thing is also seen in the differences of race, place, and capacity. Why has the Gospel been known for centuries in our country and is not known in Tibet even now? Why is it that individuals, as well as nations, differ in physical force, intellectual power, and moral capacity? It is, of course, true and obvious that these differences can be in some measure accounted for by a consideration of the forces acting and interacting by means of man's will and individuality, but only in a measure are they accounted for in this way. Man's freedom does not wholly explain them. God's inscrutable purpose is at the root of the matter, and beneath all secondary causes and explanations which do not touch the foundation, the primary cause is the will of God. "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." What is this but election, that is, selection?

We need not be surprised, therefore, if there is something in Christianity answering to this obvious fact in nature and history. The difficulty is just as real when connected with external blessings as it is when associated with spiritual things, for the underlying cause is the same in both.

**2. What then do we find in Scripture** on this subject? Just what we should expect to find, and what, as a matter of experience, we do find in nature and history. There is, first of all, clear teaching as to God's predestination, in the sense of His general purpose to provide salvation. This predestination expresses itself in the Old Testament, mainly in the form of election to privilege, national and temporal as well as spiritual. But when we come to the New Testament we find Election associated almost entirely with spiritual realities. (1) With spiritual opportunities and possibilities. (2) With spiritual privileges, possessions, and prospects. At the same time, the New Testament is equally clear as to the human response to this attitude of God. Man is to hear, heed, accept, and obey, if he would enjoy and retain these blessings. There is thus a clear, definite, and unmistakable emphasis on the two great factors, Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, but there is no attempt whatever to reconcile these two apparently opposite but complementary factors of the universe. Election is clearly to be associated with God's purpose to bring to man redemption from sin. This redemption was of Divine grace alone, and it was of God's predestinating love that Christ was given for our salvation. From the first God has taken, and still takes, the initial step in bringing salvation, making it known, and bestowing it on our lives. On the other hand, Scripture is equally clear that this Divine grace works through man's willingness to receive, welcome, and use it,



and teaches that man is responsible for receiving it, and that unless he does receive it he cannot be saved.

These two sides are separately and definitely taught in Holy Scripture, but, let it be said again, we never find any attempt at reconciliation. We must therefore hold fast to both, and emphasize both Divine grace and human will. As it has been well said, "If there were no Divine grace there would be nothing with which to save man, and if there were no human will there would be nothing in man to save." We must, therefore, be content to hold and insist upon both sides as true, without any attempt at full explanation, for with our present faculties and knowledge reconciliation is impossible. To us now the two sides seem like two parallel lines which never meet, but it may be that hereafter we shall find that what we have thought two diverging lines have really been converging lines after all. Yet even in this life in our Christian experience, as we get nearer the centre, and still more when by and by we reach the centre, we may find that the two are one.

" Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

3. Meanwhile, we must be **careful to hold all that Scripture teaches**, and hold it, moreover, in the way Scripture presents it to us.

(a) Election is always associated with union with Christ. "Chosen in Christ" (Eph. i. 4). Christ and Christ alone is the sphere of Election, and it is only as the believer is in Christ that he can regard himself as one of "the elect people of God."

(b) Election is associated with God's foreknowledge (Rom. viii. 29; 1 Pet. i. 2). God sees and knows beforehand the issues of events and actions, and though we must be careful not to make His Divine action contingent on faith, as though that were the ground and cause of salvation rather than His mercy alone, yet the fact that election is thus associated with foreknowledge is a striking indication of the balance and precision of New Testament revelation concerning us.

(c) Election is associated with God's purposes of service (Eph. ii. 10). God's chosen men are "choice" men, who are called to endure hardship, and do service for Him. So far from Election ministering to inaction and carelessness, the elect of God, whose lives are recorded in Scripture, were the most strenuous toilers, and often the greatest sufferers in history. They had the honour of being chosen, but it involved not being carried to heaven "on flowery beds of ease," but that they should "scorn delights, and live laborious days."

(d) Election is always associated with God's requirement of holiness (Eph. i. 5 ; 2 Thess. iii. 13 ; 1 Pet. i. 2 ; Rom. viii. 28-30). Holiness is the permanent and predominant thought of God in relation to man, and no election can be conceived of which does not issue in our being more and more conformed to the image of God's Son.

These four considerations will help us to see in what atmosphere, and with what safeguards, Election is taught in Scripture. It is at once the most precious and most practical of doctrines, and we may perhaps sum it up by saying—

(1) God elects to save. This means that God is first ; that salvation is no after-thought, but was purposed and planned " before the foundation of the world," as God foresaw the facts and results of human sin.

(2) God elects to save in one way only : in and through Christ.

(3) God elects to save on one condition only : through faith in Christ.

(4) In the light of the foregoing we can now approach and appreciate **the standpoint of Article XVII.** It is to be observed that these statements adhere closely to the plain teaching of Scripture, and are often in the very words of the New Testament. The following summary of the Article will perhaps guide us in our study.

(a) Predestination is " to life " and not to death, for God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that all should come to Him and be saved.

(b) Predestination is in Christ and works out by Christ.

(c) Predestination is realized in seven stages : God's calling ; our obedience through grace ; justification ; adoption ; conformity to Christ ; good works ; everlasting felicity through God's mercy. The emphasis is placed throughout on the presence and power of the grace of God as it works through our faith and response to Christ, so that the doctrine is one to be appreciated from within and from the standpoint of an already existing spiritual experience. If it is approached as an intellectual speculation, and with an endeavour to grasp and reconcile the two elements of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, the result will be failure, disappointment, and perhaps, as the Article reminds us, spiritual disaster ; but if the question of our acceptance of Christ be first of all settled, the teaching of Scripture on Election can be considered from its proper vantage ground, and then, to quote the Article, it will be found " full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort . . . because it doth greatly establish and confirm our faith of eternal salvation . . . as because it doth fervently kindle our love

towards God." No one can understand Rom. viii who has not first entered by the doorway of Rom. iii, and has experienced the teaching of Rom. iv to vii, and no one can understand in any degree whatever the doctrine of Election who has not entered by the Wicket Gate, gone up to the Cross and received assurance in his heart of sin forgiven, and the presence of the Spirit of God.

5. **On the great question** which has occupied the mind of believers in all ages, "Can believers fall away from grace and be lost for ever?" we may perhaps say that the question ought not to be considered from such an abstract and speculative standpoint. We ought not to ask "Can they?" but "Will they?" *Will* those that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have experienced the sweetness, strength, and satisfaction of His presence, leave Him? Surely not. If the matter were considered solely from the standpoint of abstract possibility; if sin be conceived of as going on unchecked and unhindered, there could not be a doubt that a Christian *could* fall away and be lost; but we are not to consider the matter in any such speculative and impossible way, but instead to remember the provision God makes, and the means He uses to prevent lapses from Himself. We may assuredly say if we will, "I have a logical conviction that in myself I can fall away, but I also have a moral conviction that, by God's grace, I shall not fall away." The Christian is never to be considered in himself, and by himself, but as he is in Christ by God's grace, and with all the safeguards and privileges of Divine power surrounding and supporting him. So that really it is no question of a logical conviction that he can or cannot fall away; the real question is to be judged on moral and spiritual grounds, and as to this we say that he will not. Consequently, the child in the Catechism is presumed to continue in the "state of salvation," and is therefore ever taught to regard himself as among "the elect people of God." For this reason also the two sides of God's truth are ever balanced in His Word, and there is no contrariety between them. The saints' "final perseverance" is a phrase which emphasizes the human side, and it is balanced by the saints' "final preservation," which emphasizes the Divine side, and so in almost every passage in which this subject is dealt with we have the Divine and human sides brought before us. (See table, top of next page).

So we hold fast by both aspects of Divine truth, and refuse to speculate or attempt any reconciliation. If we reach heaven it will only be by the grace of God, and yet that grace always works through means. Inasmuch, therefore, as no one can read his own name in the Book of Life, and since there is no personal revelation to individuals about final salvation, the only right and possible state

## THE DIVINE SIDE

- "Chosen" (Eph. i. 4).
- "Predestinated" (Eph. i. 5).
- "No man can come unto Me, except the Father . . . draw him" (John vi. 44).
- "They shall never perish" (John x. 28).
- "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19).
- "Kept by the power of God" (1 Pet. i. 5).
- "Ye are clean" (John xv. 3).
- "Ye are builded" (Eph. ii. 22).

## THE HUMAN SIDE

- "Holy" (Eph. i. 4).
- "Adopted" (Eph. i. 5).
- "Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (John vi. 45).
- "My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me" (John x. 27).
- "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. ii. 19).
- "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).
- "Cleanse yourselves" (2 Cor. vii. 1).
- "Building up yourselves" (Jude 20).

of mind and heart is the assurance of faith and hope, founded on the witness of the Holy Spirit and a consciousness of spiritual change, supported by a humble walk with God.

The power of this doctrine of Election on the Christian life is unmistakable. It humbles man's pride by putting God first as the source of all grace; it encourages our trust by assuring us that grace is a reality; it rebukes our unbelief by showing us that there is no excuse for our non-acceptance of Christ. God foresaw our need and provided the remedy. It elicits our earnestness, for it reminds us that we were in God's thought, and that we are intended to live to the praise of the glory of His grace. Thus we may look up with humble gratitude to God and say with the Apostle, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. xi. 33, 36).

## CHAPTER XX

*THE HOLY TRINITY*

THE fact that the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds have three separate paragraphs referring respectively to God the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, together with the precise wording



of the Creeds, affords clear proof that the Church accepts and confesses the Equality of the Three in Whom belief is thus professed. We are thus brought face to face with the special, characteristic, Christian revelation of the Holy Trinity. There can be but one Supreme Being Whom we call God, but we believe that this One God is revealed to us in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. This doctrine is called in theological language the Trinity or Tri-Unity. In the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds we have brought before us the confession of our separate and successive beliefs in the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but in the Athanasian Creed the doctrine of the Trinity is stated at some length. The term "Trinity" is not a Biblical word, but it is nevertheless most useful and essential in order to express New Testament teaching. Many words like "Incarnation," "Sacrament," and others, though found outside the Bible, are fit representations and expressions of Biblical teaching. A word expressive of Tri-Unity is first found in Greek (*τριάς*) towards the end of the second century, and in the Latin Church early in the third century (*Trinitas*). It expresses the real and essential Oneness of the Godhead underlying the separateness and diversity of the Persons.

The term "Person" is the usual and perhaps the best possible term to express the real distinctions in the Godhead amid the Oneness. We must, however, guard against any idea of three Gods by not pressing the term "Person" too far. The danger of Tritheism, a belief in three Gods, is best guarded against by bearing in mind what has been called the mutual inclusiveness of the Persons, so that whatever is done by the Father is done through the Son by the Holy Spirit. It is, of course, impossible for us to understand fully the meaning of this profound truth; but nevertheless, while we cannot comprehend it in its fullness, we must apprehend it in its preciousness, and to this we must now turn our attention.

1. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a **New Testament revelation**. As we have already seen, the teaching of the New Testament on our Lord's Incarnation as the Word and Son of God clearly implies that to Him is to be attributed Godhead. This brings into view a distinction between our Lord as God and the Father as God. Further, our Lord's teaching about the Holy Spirit is, as we have already noticed, a clear revelation of the attributes of Godhead as belonging to the Holy Spirit, and this at once gives us another distinction between the Holy Ghost, and the Father, and the Son. Furthermore, it is a necessity of thought and religion that there is but one God, and so we are in the presence of two lines of revelation. (1) The doctrine of One God. (2) The doctrine of Distinctions in the Godhead. The union of these two lines of

teaching is expressed in the word "Trinity," or the revelation of Three Persons and One God, or One God in Three Persons. We must continually bear in mind that the doctrine of the Trinity arises directly and necessarily out of the Incarnation of our Lord and of His claim to be the Word of God. If, therefore, the Incarnation be real, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is true. Our belief in the Trinity thus emerges immediately out of our belief in the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Godhead of the Holy Spirit as revealed by our Lord.

It is very noticeable, too, that, with one possible exception, all the writers of the New Testament were Jews, to whom the truth of the Unity of the Godhead was the very passion of their lives and religion. Yet they found no difficulty in accepting the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, or in teaching the truth which we now express by the idea of the Trinity. The simple and sufficient explanation of this remarkable fact is that these Jews approached the doctrine first of all through the avenue of personal experience, and were led thence to the consideration of it as an intellectual conception. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds take the same line. They remind us of our belief in God from the standpoint of experience as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and when this has become a personal experience and possession, we are then prepared, and only then, to let our thoughts play upon our experience in order to arrive at a reasoned statement of what is implied in our position as believers.

2. When once we have established the truth that a Trinity in the Godhead is a New Testament revelation, we have taken the proper position from which to consider the doctrine all round, and one early, natural, and necessary inquiry at once arises: **Is there any anticipation of this in the Old Testament?** We can quite well imagine Jewish believers of Apostolic days asking this question, for it would be very natural to inquire whether their own Scriptures had any hint of the doctrine. We must not fail to remember that to the Jews was specially committed the task of preserving the recognition of the Unity of the Godhead amid the degrading idolatry of surrounding nations. Among Polytheists they alone stood for a pure Monotheism which is fundamental to their idea of God. It cannot be expected therefore that there could be, or would be, any clear teaching about distinctions in the Godhead, for any prophetic anticipation of this New Testament truth might easily have been fatal to its subsequent reception, besides introducing confusion among those who were too readily tempted in the direction of Polytheism. Yet from the standpoint of a Christian believer, who has become assured from the New Testament through

personal experience of the truth of the Trinity, we may look at the Old Testament and find in it certain hints and adumbrations of the full New Testament teaching. There are five lines of suggestion, each by itself perhaps not convincing, but when taken together possessing a clear cumulative force.

(a) There is the use of the plural word for "God" (Elohim), together with a verb in the singular number (cf. Gen. i. 1, Hebrew). Then we have such phrases as "Let us make" (Gen. i. 26). "Let us go down" (Gen. xi. 7), together with the plural expressions "We," "Our," "Us." This well-known Old Testament usage may, as some think, only mean the plural of Majesty, as in the case of royalty, though in the light of a similar occurrence in the New Testament, where grammar is equally set at naught by the Apostle Paul (1 Thess. iii. 11), it is hardly too much to say that we have a hint here of some distinction in the Godhead. At least, we may think of it as suggesting an intensely living and real Monotheism as contrasted with a cold, bare Unity.

(b) The references to "the Angel of the Lord," with very evident allusions to manifestations of God, also pave the way for the Christian doctrine. In the light of such passages as Gen. xviii. 2, 16, 17, 22, 23, 33; xix. 1; Josh. v. 13-15; vi. 2; Judges xiii. 8-21, we cannot help seeing some clear hints of a distinction in the Godhead which anticipates the full Christian revelation (cf. Zech. xiii. 7).

(c) The Old Testament revelation of "The Spirit of Jehovah" points in the same direction. In Gen. i. 2 the Spirit is an energy or function of the Godhead, but later on we find clear indications of the Spirit as an Agent (Isa. xl. 13; xlviii. 16; lix. 19; lxiii. 10, 11). This is worthy of careful consideration in the light of our Lord's teaching about the Holy Spirit.

(d) The Old Testament teaching on "Wisdom." We have a remarkable personification of wisdom in Proverbs (chap. viii), and when this is read in the light of the prologue to St. John's Gospel and 1 Cor. i. 24, it is difficult to think that it is an accidental coincidence.

(e) A certain triplicity of the Divine Names is found from time to time in the Old Testament (Num. vi. 24-27; Ps. xxix. 3-5, 7-9; Ps. cxv. 9-11; Isa. vi. 3). Why there should be triplicity rather than any other form of expression is at least worth consideration.

We conclude, therefore, that from the Old Testament we can derive as clear an anticipation of the doctrine of the Trinity as could readily be expected under the circumstances of Jewish life, and in view of the special, indeed unique, testimony borne by Israel to the true idea of the Godhead up to the time of our Lord's coming.

3. The doctrine thus revealed in the New Testament, realized by personal experience, and anticipated in the Old Testament, is undoubtedly a mystery ; but at the same time, like other mysteries, **a necessity for our spiritual life.** We base our belief in it on four grounds, none of which is entirely adequate if taken alone, but which when taken all together should carry conviction to every thoughtful, earnest mind.

(a) We base it on the facts of Holy Scripture. As we have already seen, it is the clear, logical, and necessary outcome of our Lord's claim to be the Word of God. The Trinity therefore is necessarily implied in the doctrine of the Incarnation, and if the latter is a fact, the former must be true.

(b) We rest the doctrine on Christian experience. The fellowship of believers with their Lord is a reality, and no one can rob them of this precious fact. Yet such fellowship as they enjoy day by day cannot possibly spring from any human source or be anything short of that which is living and Divine. Christian fellowship with Christ is real, and this carries with it the Deity of Him with Whom we enjoy communion.

(c) We deduce this doctrine from the facts of history. When we compare other religious systems we soon become conscious that in one way or another their " God " is not a reality. Either He is so transcendent as to be entirely separate from human life as in Mohammedanism, or else He is conceived of as so immanent in human life as to be lost in it as in Buddhism. Only in Christianity are the transcendence and immanence of God at once balanced and preserved. The tendency of all Aryan religions is towards what is known as Pantheism, which implies a desire for the most intimate fellowship possible between man and God. On the other hand, and in marked contrast, all Semitic religions start from a distinct and definite conception of the Divine Personality as Sovereign, King, Creator. These two contrasted, but really complementary, ideas of the Godhead are reconciled in Christianity alone. When St. Paul stood on Mars' Hill it was an instance of the trained Semitic mind meeting men trained and taught in the Aryan religions. As we study his remarkable address, we see how he starts from their own conception of Godhead as One " In Whom we live, and move, and have our being," and gradually leads them up to the Semitic idea of God as the Supreme Judge to Whom all men must give an account. These two truths run through the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, and thus in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the revelation of God, transcendent and yet immanent, immanent and yet transcendent, all aspects of the Godhead are blended, reconciled, and find their perfect unity.



(d) Not least of all, we base our belief in the Trinity on Reason. If Jesus Christ is not God, then Christians are guilty of idolatry. There is no escape from this conclusion. At the same time, we hold that the Christian doctrine is the only way of obtaining a living thought of God. Every believer in a God wants to accept a self-existent Deity, but it is impossible to conceive of a God Who exists without relationships. These relationships must be eternal and prior to His relation to His own creation, and thus when we read that "God is Love" we see at once the fundamental and necessary demand for those distinctions in the Godhead which we express, however inadequately, by the doctrine of the Trinity. Love must have an expression, and must therefore have an Object on which to centre itself; and since God is essentially Love, that Love must have had everlasting expression and must have had an adequate Object upon which, from all Eternity, to lavish its Divine wealth of affection. Here is our simple and sufficient rational ground for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

From time to time writers on this subject have used certain analogies from nature to illustrate and suggest the probability of the Trinity, but of necessity analogies cannot carry us very far. At most they can only indicate the possibility of some threefoldness entering into the very constitution of the universe. Perhaps the best of these analogies, and one that is most worthy of our consideration, is found in the three great facts of physical science—Ether, Matter, and Energy. Ether is that invisible, but very real, substance which is found everywhere, and is one of the ultimate facts and forces of the universe. Matter is that visible fact of Science which meets us on every hand; Energy is the general and inclusive term for the various forces of Nature—Heat, Light, Sound, Electricity, and others. There is no question about the distinctness and yet the real unity of these three great facts of physical science, and it is perhaps not too much to suggest that they give us an analogy of that doctrine of the Deity which we understand as the Three in One and One in Three.

We can thus see that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is one essentially for faith, and it makes its appeal to our whole nature—mind, heart, conscience, and will. The title of Article I is rightly given as "Faith in the Holy Trinity," while the Collect for Trinity Sunday prays most appropriately that God would "keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities." It is only as our faith is exercised definitely and personally in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One Blessed and Eternal God, that our lives can possibly be protected from all adversities and enabled to realize that ideal which is God's purpose for us as we live to

His praise and glory. Every true life thus resting upon God, as revealed in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, will ever bear its witness to the reality of the Christian doctrine, saying by lip and life, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

## CHAPTER XXI

### *OBEDIENCE—(1)*

FROM the consideration of Faith, and what is implied in Belief, we naturally turn to the third promise, viz. that of Obedience. "Thirdly, that I should keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life."

**1. Obedience is the Natural and Necessary Expression of our Faith.**—Out of belief springs practice, and from our confession of faith proceeds the conduct of our life. We can readily see the supreme importance and absolute necessity of obedience. Even our own conscience tells us this quite apart from the clear teaching of the Word of God. We should show our faith by our works (Jas. ii. 18), "for faith without works is dead," and on the other hand, by works faith is perfected and proved. This is the right and proper place of obedience. It is of the utmost importance that we should see whence our obedience springs and what it is intended to express. We cannot learn this more clearly than in Article XII—

"Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

This great truth is simply and helpfully taught in some popular lines—

"I would not work my soul to save,  
For that my Lord has done;  
But I would work like any slave,  
For love of God's dear Son."

When once we realize the proper position of obedience as the outcome of faith, we realize what the Christian life demands from us. As it has been well said, "While it is faith alone that justifies, the faith that justifies is never alone." This obedience is not only the fruit and proof of our Christian faith, it is the pathway of further experience and blessing in the Christian life. Obedience is an organ of spiritual knowledge. "If any man wills to do His will,

he shall know" (John vii. 17), and faithfulness to what we know will always bring with it still greater blessing. Our Lord very clearly associated the gift of the Holy Spirit with obedience. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments; and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter" (John xiv. 15, 16). It is impossible, therefore, to over-estimate the necessity and blessing of keeping God's holy Will and Commandments, and walking in the same all the days of our life.

2. **The standard of our obedience**, as already implied, is to be found in the Bible, the Word of God, the record of God's holy Will and Commandments. As the Bible is the rule of our faith, so also is it the rule of our obedience. Nothing short of the Word of God can be the standard of man's life, for it is impossible for man to form his own rule and standard of living, lest he should be satisfied with that which is manifestly imperfect, partial, and therefore wrong. Man's true life is only fully realized when it is submitted to, and ever tested and guided by, the unerring rule of God's perfect Will and infallible Word.

The Will of God, as revealed in His Word, is clearly and concisely stated for us in the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and our Lord's summary of those Commandments in the New Testament. In these statements we have the leading principles of our true and necessary relations to God and man which are to be expressed in obedience. The Ten Commandments constitute the moral law as distinct from the ceremonial and national law given to the Jews by God. The ceremonial and national aspects have necessarily passed away, but the principles of the moral law are eternal, and are as binding on us to-day as ever, though the precise foundations and sanctions with which they are associated naturally differ for us as compared with the Jews of old. The Ten Commandments give us the ten conditions of God's Covenant of love with His people in all ages, and it is important for us to bear in mind the clear teaching of Article VII on this subject.

"The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man."

We can see the truth of all this when we study our Lord's answer to the question of the lawyer who asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt. xxii. 35-40). Our Lord answered him by saying that love to God and our neighbour sums up the whole of man's relation to the law, and we find the Apostle echoing his Master's words by telling us that "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

3. **The ground of our obedience** needs careful statement and

emphasis. In our Catechism the Commandments are prefaced by the words, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This statement clearly shows the basis upon which God places obedience and the observance of these commandments. It was because He was already their God and had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt that they were called upon to observe His laws. They were already a redeemed people when they received this law at Sinai, and because they were redeemed they were to be obedient. Relationship, therefore, based on redemption was the ground of their obedience. In like manner Christians are redeemed from the bondage of sin, and are then, and only then, required to obey because God is their own God and they are God's people. This is the great principle insisted upon by the Apostle who prefates his appeal for obedience by reminding those to whom he is writing of "the mercies of God" by which they have been redeemed (Rom. xii. 1).

4. **The scope of obedience**, as shown in the Ten Commandments, now comes before us. It might seem at first sight that Commandments given originally to Jews under very different circumstances from those of modern days would be unsuitable to the complexity of modern needs, and yet when these Commandments are examined they are found to be a wonderfully complete presentation of our relationship to God and man. This can best be seen by means of a diagram—

DUTY TO GOD.		DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.	
Thoughts.	I Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.	VI Thou shalt do no murder.	Deeds.
	II Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.	VII Thou shalt not commit adultery.	
Words.	III Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.	VIII Thou shalt not steal.	
Deeds.	IV Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.	IX Thou shalt not bear false witness.	Words.
	V Honour thy father and thy mother.	X Thou shalt not covet.	

We can see from this the remarkable completeness of the presentation of God's will. God is put first, and our attitude to Him clearly stated in several particulars. Then comes our true relation to those who are God's representatives, our parents, those who during the



earliest days stand to us in the place of God. Lastly, we see our attitude to those around us, and our life in relation to man is brought clearly in view in every essential particular. We notice, moreover, that each part of our obedience refers to thoughts, words, and actions, and beyond these it is as unnecessary as it is impossible to go. Further, we can see by the first two Commandments and the last of the ten being concerned with thoughts, how fundamental it is for the inner life to be right if the outward expression of it in word and deed is to be true to the will of God. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7), and when we remember our Lord's Divine interpretation of some of these commandments in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 21-37), we have a fresh indication of the importance of keeping the heart diligently, for out of it are the issues of life. Is it not remarkable, therefore, that a code of laws given to people just emerging from slavery, and under an entirely different set of circumstances, should be equally applicable to all time and circumstances? Surely we have here a clear proof of the Divine inspiration of these Ten Commandments!

5. **The positive character of obedience** must also occupy our attention. The Ten Commandments are couched for the most part in negative form, "Thou shalt not," and as such they have been well likened to sentries on guard at the gateway of the soul. Man's life, however, needs very much more than to be told what he is not to do, and consequently, as we have already seen, when we turn to the New Testament the Commandments are transformed into positive duties of obedience, which find their highest expression in love to God and man. Following this New Testament teaching, the Catechism amplifies the Commandments by stating the positive meaning to be associated with each one. To this detailed statement of what is involved in our obedience we now turn.

## CHAPTER XXII

### OBEDIENCE—(2)

"WHAT dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments?" "I learn . . . my duty," This word "duty" is the keynote of the believer's life, for it expresses that which is "due" to God from us. In like manner, when prompted by conscience we say "I ought," we mean "I owe it" to God. This thought of duty is an essential characteristic, not only of the New Testament, but of the Church of Christ, and of the English Church in particular. For centuries

these Commandments have been read in the hearing of assembled worshippers, and have formed the groundwork of the training of millions of young lives. Whatever robustness and reality are found in the English character may be set down very largely to this insistence on duty as springing out of our redemption in Christ Jesus, and of our true relation to God as "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven."

These duties are summed up in two great divisions. "My duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour." There is, however, a question of some importance as to the precise division of the Commandments by which these two parts of our duty are indicated. For centuries past in the Western Church of Christendom the usual division has been four and six, dealing respectively with God and man, but an older division, and one still maintained by the Eastern Church, and also found in Jewish Synagogues, makes the break at the end of the fifth Commandment. On the whole, the latter would seem to be the more correct and true view; not only is the division of the ten Commandments into five and five more natural in itself, but it is hardly correct to class our parents with our neighbours, for parents in Scripture are never regarded as "neighbours," i.e. as on an equality with us. They are God's representatives, and we are subject to them, and are called upon to honour them. Another slight indication of this true division is that the first five Commandments have the phrase, "The Lord thy God," which is not found in any of the remaining five, and which may be said to link together the first five Commandments. Probably we shall be right in regarding the fifth Commandment as the link between the two divisions, summing up the first four and concentrating our attention upon the earthly authority appointed by God, and at the same time preparing the way for those duties to our fellow men which naturally spring out of our earthly life and relationship.

# I

Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.

My duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength.

This Commandment concentrates our attention upon the one Supreme *Object* of worship in order that God may be a constant reality in our lives. Rivals to God vary throughout the ages, and the breach of this Commandment will differ to-day as compared with Old Testament times; but whilst the form varies the underlying principle remains the same, and God must at all costs be put first and foremost in our lives.

## II

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

To worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him.

Here our attention is directed towards the *Manner* and spirit of worship. It is only too possible for us to make grave mistakes in our ideas of God, and therefore in our worship of Him. We are forbidden to make any visible representations of Him for the purpose of worship, or as helps to worship. There is, of course, no prohibition of art in itself, only of the abuse of art in connection with divine worship. "God is Spirit," and it is impossible for us to conceive of any visible representation which will in any way help us to worship in spirit and truth.

### A Jealous God.

The term, as applied to God, means that He rightly expects the undivided loyalty, love, and worship of His children (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 2).

### Third and Fourth Generation.

This is the theological statement of the scientific law of heredity so solemnly brought out by the scientific researches of modern times.

### Unto Thousands,

i.e. of generations, not merely of individuals (cf. Deut. vii. 9). Evil is to persist to the fourth generation, whilst good will persist much longer. This is our hope and encouragement in the face of the power of evil, that good has still greater power.

In the explanation of these two Commandments in the Catechism it is important to emphasize the sevenfold repetition of the word "Him." My duty to God is to believe in *Him*, to fear *Him*, etc. Thus, occupied with Him we cannot but worship aright and as He would have us do.

## III

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain.

To honour his holy Name and his Word.

This Commandment calls our attention to the need of *Reality* of worship, warning us against all irreverence, profaneness, and unreality.

**The Name,**

i.e. not the mere title, but the entire revelation of His Person and Character, all that is known of Him as revealed in His Word (Ps. cxviii. 10-12; John xiv. 13, 14; John xvii. 6). The "Name" in Scripture is not a label or mark of distinction. It is equivalent to the character or revealed personality of God.

**In Vain,**

i.e. unworthily, with unreality and carelessness.

## IV

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

And to serve him truly all the days of my life.

This Commandment emphasizes God's claim upon us in connexion with the *Day* of worship. It is a reminder that God may easily be crowded out of our life by the multiplicity of worldly engagements and pleasures. One of the chief advantages of the Sabbath day is that it calls upon us to pause and remember God's right to our life and time.

**Remember.**

The only Commandment that begins in this way, evidently a reminder that the Sabbath is older than the Jewish law, and dates from creation (cf. Gen. ii. 2, 3; Exod. xvi. 23). The relation of Christians to this fourth Commandment is further considered in a later chapter (p. 171).



## V

Honour thy father and thy mother ;  
that thy days may be long in the  
land which the Lord thy God giveth  
thee.

My duty towards my neighbour is  
to love him as myself, and to do to all  
men as I would they should do unto  
me : To love, honour, and succour  
my father and mother : To honour  
and obey the King, and all that are  
put in authority under him : To  
submit myself to all my governors,  
teachers, spiritual pastors and  
masters. To order myself lowly and  
reverently to all my betters.

From the attitude of worship we are called to the attitude of *Honour*. The Home is our earliest school, and in it we learn those lessons of authority which are at the foundation of all true life, individual and national. Honour is very much more than obedience, and includes respect and regard as well as the fulfilment of duty.

The Catechism rightly amplifies and elaborates this duty to parents so as to include due recognition of and submission to the authority of all those who are in any way over us in our earthly life.

### **As I would they should do unto me.**

Cf. Matt. vii. 12. An inclusive statement of that which is subsequently brought before us in detail in the rest of the Commandments.

### **Honour and obey the King.**

Paternal love comes first, but patriotic love is intended to follow as soon as possible (Rom. xiii. 1-7 ; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14).

### **Governors,**

i.e. guardians, trustees.

### **Spiritual pastors,**

i.e. the ministers of our Churches.

### **Masters,**

i.e. our employers.

### **Betters,**

i.e. those who are above us in position. The duty becomes easy when they are our superiors in character as well as in position, but the duty is incumbent upon us in any case.

## VI

Thou shalt do no murder.

To hurt nobody by word nor  
deed : . . . To bear no malice nor  
hatred in my heart.

The Catechism follows closely our Lord's words about the avoidance of unnecessary and unrighteous anger and temper (Matt. v. 21, 22). At the outset of our Duty to our Neighbour we are taught the *sanctity of human life*.

## VII

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity.

Another Commandment dealing with the *sanctity and purity of human life*, our own, and that of others. As in the sixth so now in the seventh, we are warned against the indulgence of passions. Again, too, we notice our Lord's interpretation of this Commandment, reaching to the very thoughts of the heart (Matt. v. 27, 28).

The three words, "temperance, soberness, chastity," sum up the whole of our duty in regard to evil possibilities and desires. The first two are general, and cover the whole of our life, and when they are carefully observed they make the observance of the third easy and natural.

## VIII

Thou shalt not steal.

To be true and just in all my dealing: . . . To keep my hands from picking and stealing.

From the sanctity of life we are brought to consider the *sanctity of property*, and the need of absolute honour and integrity in all our dealings.

## IX

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

And my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering.

Not merely our neighbour's life and property, but his *reputation* is in our hands, and truth must ever be the spirit and character of our speech (cf. Eph. iv. 25).

## X

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

Not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.

In some respects this Commandment is at the root of all our relations to our fellow men. It inculcates the spirit of contentment, and when this fills the soul there cannot be any breach of the laws of love. The last words of the Catechism, "To do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me," do not forbid, or even deprecate, right and worthy ambitions in life, for

they clearly indicate the possibility that the child may be called to any position, even the highest ; “ unto which it *shall* please God to call me.” What they really inculcate is that spirit of quiet restfulness in the doing of our duty, and that faithfulness in all calls upon us which mark the true life and give the only adequate guarantees of real progress.

Reviewing the whole of these Commandments, we may regard them as emphasizing the following points in a positive way—

- |                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Wholehearted devotion. | 6. Peace.        |
| 2. Spiritual worship.     | 7. Purity.       |
| 3. Deep reverence.        | 8. Honesty.      |
| 4. Consecrated time.      | 9. Truth.        |
| 5. Honour to authority.   | 10. Contentment. |

In the light of our Lord’s words and the Apostolic teaching on love as the fulfilment of the law, we may say that love fulfils the Commandments thus—

1. Love to God will never tolerate a rival.
2. Love to God will always worship in spirit and truth.
3. Love to God will delight to reverence His name.
4. Love to God will always acknowledge His claim on our time.
5. Love to parents will always guarantee honour.
6. Love to man will always respect his life.
7. Love to man will always respect sexual purity.
8. Love to man will delight to give, not take away.
9. Love to man will speak in truth and kindness.
10. Love to man will seek to give, not to covet.

Thus we have seen something of what obedience means and involves, and if our hearts shrink back from the standard here set before us, we should at once remind ourselves of the words of our Lord, “ Without Me ye can do nothing ” (John xv. 5), and of the words of His Apostle, “ I can do all things through Him which strengtheneth me ” (Phil. iv. 13). Well does our Catechism follow the Duty to God and Neighbour by these familiar words, “ My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace.” God has provided for our weakness and inability, and most naturally we now turn to the consideration of that Grace of God which is sufficient for our every need, and by which we are enabled to do the will of God and to walk in His ways.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## GRACE

THE questions of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience have necessarily concentrated attention on the human side of the Christian life and on our personal responsibility and obligation to fulfil our side of the Covenant. Yet the consideration of this side alone may easily lead to discouragement, and cause us to feel our utter helplessness and inability to fulfil God's requirements. Hence it is that the Catechism while very emphatic upon our fulfilment of the three vows of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, and our obligation to fulfil them, is equally clear upon the need and provision of Divine grace in order that we may rejoice and abide in a state of salvation unto our life's end. Like St. Paul, we can therefore cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16) and like him we can reply, "Our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5).

**1. The Meaning of Grace.**—"I pray unto God to give me His grace." "His special grace." Grace is a general word including all those gifts for the spiritual life which have been provided for us through the redeeming work of Christ, and which are bestowed on the soul by the Holy Spirit of God. The word "Grace" is associated with two things: (a) God's attitude of favour towards His people; His graciousness to us in Christ. (b) God's action in freely bestowing all needful power and blessing. In regard to the former, "grace" means God's bounty or blessing, emphasising the freeness of His gift. In regard to the latter, a good modern equivalent for a number (but not all) of the New Testament passages where the word "grace" is found is "energy," and several of such passages read in this light will show what "His special grace" means for daily living.

"The 'energy' of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xvi. 20; Gal. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 23).

"By the 'energy' of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

Grace, then, means the free favour of God in Christ and also the power of God possessed by the believer through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

**2. The Need of Grace.**—Why is the Catechism so insistent upon the impossibility of our fulfilling the Will of God by ourselves? "Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself." The effects of sin are such that it is impossible for man to do God's Will without Divine grace. Following our Lord's declaration to His disciples, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing," Article X states the truth with clearness and force—



"The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

Sin has affected every part of our being; our thoughts, so that we cannot think those things that be good; our desires, so that we cannot aspire to holy things; our feelings, so that we are not impressed with holiness; our wills, so that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves. Divine grace therefore comes bringing life for the soul, purity for the heart, light for the mind, and power for the will. God is revealed to us as "the God of all grace," and the Apostolic benediction brings into prominence "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. xiii. 14). To speak of grace is only another way of saying that we receive the Lord Jesus Christ in all the glory of His presence and power as the indwelling energy for holiness and obedience. The Holy Spirit applies with power to our inner being the life of our Lord Jesus, and in this is "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 16). From the earliest moment of the Christian life our need of grace is to be emphasized, and notwithstanding all our growth in grace, and our deepening experience of the love of God in Christ, our need of grace never grows less, but in some respects is an ever-increasing requirement. God's Divine power has provided "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. i. 3), and no heart need be discouraged or cast down with the thought of life's difficulties and perplexities in view of the marvellous and bountiful provision of grace to meet every possible contingency, and to guarantee a strong, growing, vigorous life. "With God all things are possible," and "all things are possible to him that believeth."

**3. The Means of Grace.**—The question now naturally arises how this Divine grace comes to us. How can the energy of God be made available for our life? This leads us to the consideration of what are known as the Means of Grace, those agencies by which the grace of God becomes operative in the hearts of men. These Means are several in number, and varied in character according to our needs. First and foremost and covering everything is Faith in God. Trust on the part of the believer is our response to God's love, and the result is the experience of grace in the soul. The importance of Faith in all things and at all times is evident, for "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But Faith works in several ways, and God has associated His grace with particular conditions and Ordinances which are called Means of Grace. Faith is necessary under every condition and in all the

Ordinances, but these special agencies need our careful thought and study.

(a) Private means of grace are—

(1) Prayer.

(2) The Bible.

(b) Public means of grace are—

(1) Christian Worship.

(2) The Sacraments.

Of course, it can be readily understood that this division is only quite general and made for convenience. Prayer is at once public and private. The Bible is read in public and private. Worship, too, can be public and private. Speaking generally, however, the above outline may guide us in our consideration of the various means of grace through which God's blessings come to the soul.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MEANS OF GRACE—PRAYER—(1)

BOTH in the Bible and in the Prayer Book Divine grace is specially associated with prayer. "His special grace ; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer."

1. **The Idea of Prayer.**—The simplest definition of prayer is that of the soul talking to God, but there are several elements in prayer, and a careful study of the words and phrases of the New Testament will be of great help to us in this connexion. Of these the following are the most frequent and the most important :

(a) Prayer is a sense of need (*δέησις*) (Eph. vi. 18).

(b) Prayer is an expression of desire (*αἰτήματα*) (Phil. iv. 6).

(c) Prayer is an attitude of consecration (*προσευχή*) (Acts i. 14).

These thoughts of Need, Desire, and Consecration plainly tell us what prayer is intended to be and to accomplish. On the one hand, if there is no need felt there will be no desire expressed. On the other hand, when the need is realized and the desire mentioned to God the attitude of the soul will be one of wholehearted surrender and trust waiting upon God for the answer. There is nothing more wonderful than the communication of a soul with the eternal God. The telephone, the telegraph, and ocean cable are but faint illustrations of the wonder and glory of prayer in which the individual holds converse with God and tells out his heart's desires.

2. **The Need of Prayer.**—Prayer is the natural and necessary outcome of our relation to God. The earliest mark of the newborn soul in the case of Saul the persecutor was, "Behold he prayeth" (Acts ix. 11). "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath."

No life is possible, and no power can come in the life without it. Prayer is one of the essential elements of that fellowship with God without which the soul cannot live, or work, or grow.

Prayer is the means of expressing and maintaining our right relation to God. The true attitude of the soul is a complex one of submission, desire, trust, and fellowship. Surrender, followed by aspiration, continued by dependence, and culminating in fellowship, should be our attitude; and for all this we need and must have constant prayer. It is not too much to say that prayer enters into every element and aspect of our hidden life. Would we be right and true and strong within? Let us pray.

Prayer, too, leads to the constant realization of the presence of God. "His presence is salvation." The peace of His presence, calming; the joy of His presence, cheering; the light of His presence, guiding; the glory of His presence, irradiating. And all this is made real by prayer.

Then by prayer the will of God is made clear to us. The perceptions of the soul are clarified. The balance of the soul is poised. The determinations of the soul are strengthened. We "perceive and know what things we ought to do," and that sure mark of spiritual growth, spiritual perception, becomes ours in ever-increasing measure as we "pray, always pray."

Prayer is also necessary in relation to spiritual power. Who does not realize constantly "the plague of his own heart"? Who is not ever confronted with the terrible fact and awful possibilities of "indwelling sin"? Yet who does not also know that "prayer is power," because it brings power? The heart becomes garrisoned, the conscience is made more sensitive, the will is strengthened, and the soul protected on every side.

Who does not know, too, the power of temptation and the hideous possibilities of backsliding? Yet here also prayer spells power, for it arms us against temptation, so that "nothing shall by any means hurt" us. And it guards against backsliding by keeping the crevices of the soul intact, and preserving us against spiritual leakage.

Who does not also feel at times the tendency to slacken in service, and to regard his work as a burden? Prayer makes duty light and service delightful. We are "strengthened with all might," and become "ready for every good work," and then His "yoke is easy" and "to serve Him is to reign" (*Cui servire est regnare*). His service is "perfect freedom" when prayer lubricates the life.

3. **The Warrant of Prayer.**—Arguments are sometimes used against prayer based on *a priori* grounds. Sometimes it is said that God works solely by law, and that the immutability of law affords no room for prayer. At other times it is urged that God's foreknowledge of events precludes the necessity of prayer. Yet again it is argued that God's greatness and majesty contrasted with our insignificance is a reason for questioning whether prayer can possibly have any effect. In reply to these arguments we simply say that Law, Foreknowledge, and Majesty are not the sole and complete expressions of God's relation to His creatures. Even on abstract grounds we may ask whether prayer may not be included and provided for in the laws of the universe. We may also regard it as possible that God's very Foreknowledge has anticipated the necessity of prayer, and how can it be thought unworthy of God that He should heed the cry of even the weakest and poorest of His creatures. We turn from all such *a priori* considerations which really tell us nothing, and base our doctrine of prayer on God's revelation of Himself in Christ. Prayer is founded on Promise, and finds its sufficient warrant in the Word of God. In all ages of spiritual history the servants of God have been men of prayer. The lives of such saints and warriors as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Paul, John, to say nothing of the records of the Christian centuries, bear their plain testimony to the possibility, power, and preciousness of prayer. Above all, we have the example of our Lord Who, as the Perfect Man, lived a life of prayer. There is nothing more striking in its way than the record of our Lord's seasons of private prayer and personal communion with God. Added to this example, we have His encouragements and promises with reference to prayer. At the outset of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, He gave us His earliest charter of prayer: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7), and in His latest and most spiritual teaching on the eve of His Crucifixion new lessons of asking "in His Name" were taught to His disciples. Further, we have abundant counsels about prayer throughout the Lord's earthly ministry, and to crown all, as we shall see hereafter, He has provided a model of prayer. To the Christian soul nothing more is needed than this. God's promises encourage us; His commands incite us; and His counsels and instructions teach us the meaning, value, and methods of prayer.

4. **The Spirit of Prayer.**—There is a secret in everything—in the ocean cable, in wireless telegraphy, and in prayer. This secret is found in great measure in the heart of the suppliant and in his attitude towards God. This constitutes the spirit of prayer, and its conditions need our earnest attention and thoughtful meditation.



(a) Prayer is to be offered in the Holy Spirit. In connexion with wireless telegraphy, the receiver has to be tuned and adjusted in order to receive the message as it comes across the waves of ether. This adjustment must be in exact correspondence with the instrument at a distance that sends the message, otherwise it will pass by unrecognized. In like manner there is a wonderful provision in the spiritual world whereby the Holy Spirit adjusts our spirit into harmony with God in order that we may pray aright. The Apostle James reminds us of the opposite of this when he says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (iv. 3). "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20) means in union with the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, and as prompted by Him.

(b) Prayer must be in the Name of Christ (John xv. 7 ; xvi. 24), that is, in union with all that we know of Him, in fellowship with His revealed character as recorded in the Word of God.

(c) Prayer must be submissive, that is, according to the will of God (1 John v. 14), for only thus can it possibly be acceptable in His sight.

Other conditions of true prayer are found in the Word of God and call for our careful study. It must be unceasing (Rom. i. 9) ; steadfast (Rom. xii. 12) ; earnest (Col. ii. 1) ; in faith (Mark xi. 24) ; accompanied by forgiveness (Mark xi. 25) ; and by thanksgiving (Phil. iv. 6). It is the presence of these requirements which give such point to the words of the Church Catechism which tell us that "we must *learn* at all times to call for grace by diligent prayer." Prayer is part, and a very important part, of the education of the soul. Even though prayer may be said to start almost instinctively in a rudimentary form in the newborn soul, its true realization, enjoyment, and blessing call for thought and earnest effort.

Moreover, prayer to be effectual must be offered (1) at stated times, (2) at all times. One of the marks of a true Christian experience is the habit of ejaculatory prayer, prayer that darts up like an arrow to God from time to time, finding its joy and power in pouring itself out as need arises. But for this attitude of prayer we must have times of prayer. The attitude is based on acts, and times of prayer are necessary as the occasions of storage and accumulation of light, and power, and grace. Let us see to it that not a day passes without definitely going aside with God for solitary prayer. Our time may not be long, but it must be regular ; and from the act will come the habit, and from the habit the attitude, and from the attitude the character—settled, strong, sure, and abiding—wherein God's presence will be more and more a delight, and God's power more and more realized.

## CHAPTER XXV

*MEANS OF GRACE—PRAYER—(2)*

IN addition to the general counsel and instructions on prayer which we find running through the New Testament, our Lord has left us a model and standard of our prayer which we call the Lord's Prayer, though strictly it should be called the Lord's Prayer for His Disciples. Our Church very appropriately associates our need of prayer with the Lord's Prayer as the means above all others of our realization of what prayer implies and brings. After calling attention to the need of diligent prayer at all times for Divine grace, the Catechism gives us the Lord's Prayer as our model whereby we may call earnestly and constantly upon God for grace. Let us note once again the familiar words.

Our Father Who art in heaven.  
 Thy Name be hallowed.  
 Thy Kingdom come.  
 Thy will be done.  
 As in Heaven so in Earth.  
 Give us this day our daily bread.  
 Forgive us our trespasses.  
 Lead us not into temptation.  
 Deliver us from evil.

Our Lord gave this prayer to His disciples both as a form (Matt. vi. 9-13) and as a model (Luke xi. 2-4) of prayer. There are seven petitions, three referring to God with the word "Thy" in each, and four referring to our need with the word "us" in each. In the light of the use of the numbers three and four in Holy Scripture we can see the appropriateness of this prayer and its completeness when the Divine and human aspects are thus combined to make the perfect number, seven. There are three petitions with reference to God's glory, and four petitions concerning our personal needs. The three first petitions are for—

- (1) Reverence. "Hallowed be Thy Name."
- (2) Allegiance. "Thy Kingdom come."
- (3) Obedience. "Thy will be done."

The four petitions which follow are for—

- (1) God's provision. "Daily Bread."
- (2) God's pardon. "Forgive us."
- (3) God's protection. "Lead us not into temptation."
- (4) God's power. "Deliver us from evil."

In all these respects we can readily see how beautiful and perfect the prayer is as a model and standard for our life. The order, too, of these elements is to be noticed. Prayer for the Divine glory comes first, for our prayers should be primarily with reference to God's will rather than concerned with our own needs. We see in it, too, the missionary aspects of prayer as we pray that God's Name may be hallowed, His Kingdom come, and His Will be done. We observe, moreover, the corporate and social aspects of prayer as we pray not for ourselves only, but for all who, with us, are enabled to say "Our Father."

The Prayer Book version of the Lord's Prayer does not correspond exactly with the Authorized or Revised versions, but follows most closely a book of devotion known as *The King's Book*, or, to give it its full title, *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*, which was issued in 1543. The amplification of the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism known as "The Desire" is singularly beautiful and helpful in its suggestiveness for true prayer and intercession. It will merit all the attention we can give to it.

Our Father, which art in heaven.

I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people.

The opening words at once remind us of an already existing relationship. We come as children to their Father. This Fatherhood is, of course, that spiritual relationship which is ours through faith in Christ Jesus (John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26). The revelation of God's Fatherhood is the strongest guarantee and the most effectual assurance that prayer is possible, and will be answered. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 13)

Hallowed be Thy Name.

That we may worship Him.

The "Name" of God, as we have already seen, is not any title that we associate with Him, but the revelation of His Nature and Character. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower" (Prov. xviii. 10). To "hallow" God's Name is to separate and exalt it as supreme in our thought, affection, and life. The word "hallow" is associated with, and equivalent to, "holy" and "sanctified," the root idea of which is separation. The meaning of the petition is thus evident. We must separate and distinguish God's Nature and Character from all else, and see that it is ever first and foremost in our lives. "In the beginning God." In "The Desire" this petition is interpreted to mean, "that we may worship Him," i.e. that we

may acknowledge His worth and render to Him the adoration and glory due to His Name. Worship is the outgoing of the whole being towards God, ascribing "worth" to Him, and saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord" (Rev. iv. 11).

Thy kingdom come.

Serve Him.

God's Kingdom is His rule over hearts and lives. The prayer implies that the Kingdom, though already in existence, has not yet come in its fullness. At present it is in the hearts of His people as an invisible power (Luke xvii. 20. 21; Rom. xiv. 17), but it is yet to come as an outward and visible rule for the world. When we pray to the Father that His Kingdom may come, we are praying for the hastening of that ultimate and final day when God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24; Matt. xiv. 33; xxvi. 29).

Thy will be done.

And obey Him.

This is the culminating point of the rule of God over men. Loyalty and homage are to be expressed in obedience, and obedience is the realization of God's will. The will of God is ever set before us as the supreme motive and ideal of life. "Teach me to do Thy will" is our highest prayer, and "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

In earth as it is in heaven.

As we ought to do.

It is almost certain that these words are to be applied to the three petitions and not to the one only. We have endeavoured to show this in the above form of the Lord's Prayer. God's will is done in heaven perfectly, heartily, and with unquestioning obedience.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And I pray unto God, that He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies.

From prayer for God's glory we turn to petitions for our own needs. The Catechism extends the idea of daily bread to that which is needful for soul as well as body, though it may be questioned whether, in view of what follows in the prayer, our Lord intended more than bodily need. We ask here for necessities, not luxuries, and we ask day by day in trustful confidence without anxiety. We also ask unselfishly, including others, and, indeed, the whole of God's great family on earth.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And that He will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins.

This is the first great need of the soul—forgiveness. Sin is at once a debt (Matt. vi. 12), and a transgression. It is important



to notice how closely the Lord associates our forgiveness of others with God's forgiveness of us (Matt. xviii. 35 ; Mark xi. 25). Not that our forgiveness is the ground of God's forgiveness, but it certainly is a condition of our full realization of His mercy and grace. It is impossible for us to realize God's wondrous love if our own hearts are unloving to others.

And lead us not into temptation.  
But deliver us from evil. Amen.

And that it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily ; and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen, So be it.

Temptation here means trial, for God cannot tempt to evil (Jas. i. 13). The soul now conscious of God's forgiveness naturally shrinks from falling again into sin, and so prays that it may be preserved from trial ; yet at the same time, if it be God's will that trial should come, the soul asks to be kept from evil and from the Evil One who would take advantage of the circumstances to lead us astray.

In "The Desire" the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ is appropriately included as the ground and reason of our prayers, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Amen" fitly closes the prayer, which gives us the believer's personal response and the conviction that prayer thus offered is sure of the Divine answer. It is very probable, as we have seen, that the real meaning of "Amen" is not a petition, "So be it," but a confession or expression of assurance, "So it is," or "So it shall be" ; the soul thus setting its seal on God's revelation. This appears to be the truer interpretation of the Hebrew word.

The Doxology is given in St. Matthew's account of the prayer, and is found in the Prayer Book at the beginning of the Services for daily prayer, after the reception of the Elements at Holy Communion, in the Churching Service and also in the Prayers for Use at Sea.

We can readily see from the slight consideration we have been able to give to this wonderful prayer, that it affords a constant guide to and test of the spiritual life. Its very familiarity is our great danger, and yet when the soul comes back again and again to the well-known phrases it finds unfathomed, and perhaps, unfathomable depths for the spiritual life and experience wherein we are able to enter into closer fellowship with God.

We have thus seen something of the indications of God's will concerning prayer, and if only the force of the Word of God is

allowed to impress itself on our souls, the immediate and ever-increasing result will be a life of prayer ; and with it a life of power, peace, purity, progress, and praise.

## CHAPTER XXVI

*MEANS OF GRACE—THE BIBLE*

THE Bible is not mentioned in the Catechism as a means of grace, because the whole Catechism is based on the Word of God. Indeed, the entire Prayer Book itself is a testimony to the all-embracing authority and power of Holy Scripture. Yet we must not overlook the fact and great importance of the Bible in this connexion, for it is one of the most important channels of Divine grace to the soul. If it is wonderful for us to speak to God in prayer, it is no less wonderful for God to speak to us in His Word. In days of old, in a special and unique sense "the word of the Lord came" to His servants. So now, though in a different way, we may truly say that the word of the Lord comes to those who are willing to listen to His voice as revealed in the Bible. "God . . . hath spoken unto us . . . by His Son" (Heb. i. 1, 2), and by the power of the Holy Spirit God still speaks to the listening heart and obedient soul.

1. **The Bible occupies a unique position** as the embodiment in writing of the revelation of God made to us in Christ. From the Bible we derive our knowledge of God and His will, and through the Bible we obtain all needed light and guidance to live the Christian life. The uniqueness of Holy Scripture lies mainly in the fact that it is the only book in the world which tells and assures us of two great realities which it is of the utmost importance for us to know.

(a) The revelation of God as Love.

(b) The revelation of complete deliverance from sin.

These two are in some respects the peculiar characteristics of the Christian religion as embodied in the Word of God. All through the Prayer Book Holy Scripture is brought before us as the ultimate and final authority on all essential matters connected with Christianity. The statement of Article VI cannot be too carefully noted and understood.

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

It is evident, therefore, that the Bible must occupy not merely a prominent, but even a predominant place in every true Christian

life, and as a matter of fact this has been so in the life of God's saints in all ages, just as it now is in the formularies of the Church of England. Our Prayer Book is simply saturated with Biblical ideas, words and phrases, and when we remember the use of Scripture in the Lessons and in the Book of Psalms, together with the constant appeal to Holy Scriptures found in the Articles, we can readily see the unmistakable prominence given to the Word of God in our Church.

2. For the present, however, we are mainly concerned with the **Bible in relation to practical Christian living**, and its power in the daily life to influence mind, motive, heart and conscience in everything connected with truth, purity and holiness. The power of the Bible in these respects is nothing short of marvellous, and can hardly be over-estimated. We may, perhaps, see this truth best by a consideration of several passages which emphasize it. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Ps. cxix. 11). "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Ps. xxxvii. 31). "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). We can also see something of the power of the Bible in the various symbols used to describe the effects of the Word of God in human life. The Word is the mirror to reveal (Jas. i); the water to cleanse (Eph. v); the milk to nourish (1 Pet. ii); the strong meat to invigorate (Heb. v); the honey to delight (Ps. cxix); the fire to warm (Jer. xxiii); the hammer to break and fasten (Jer. xxiii); the sword to fight (Eph. vi); the seed to grow (Matt. xiii); the lamp to guide (Ps. cxix); the statute-book to legislate (Ps. cxix); and the gold to treasure in time and for eternity (Ps. xix).

In order that we may still further realize the value and necessity of the Bible as a means of grace, we may notice some of the spiritual results that accrue from its use in daily life. The Word of God hidden in the heart will give spiritual *peace*. "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall cause them to stumble" (Ps. cxix. 165). In proportion as we keep close to the Word of God there comes into the heart a wonderful peace and rest of soul. Our duties may be irksome, our difficulties great, our circumstances trying, but with the Word of God in the heart nothing can rob us of that calmness of spirit and rest of heart which is one of the true marks of the Christian life.

Another result of God's Word in our lives will be more effectual *prayer*. The Word of God is the fuel of our prayers, and when our hearts are full of the Bible our hearts will become rich, and the very phraseology of our petitions definite and real. The promises of God, the warnings, the exhortations, the counsels, and the hopes found in the Scriptures will feed the soul and enable it to pour itself out in prayer.

The Word of God is also the secret of *purity*. It cleanses the soul; "the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. v. 26). The Word hidden in the heart keeps the motives pure and preserves the thoughts from uncleanness. The more we allow the Word of God to dwell in our heart, the greater will be our purity of thought, motive, desire, and life.

Not the least important result of the Word of God in the soul is the spiritual *perception* that will come. We get to understand and see things much more clearly and deeply. Spiritual understanding is the mark of a growing and ripening Christian, and this is only possible as we keep close to the Word of God. With heart and mind exercised therein and thereby, we shall never wander from the truth, but shall have such a clear, definite understanding of God's will as will make our whole being responsive to His guidance.

Nor must we forget that the Word of God hidden in the heart is the secret of spiritual *power*. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John ii. 14). The man in whose heart the Word of God abides will always find spiritual power in character, conduct, and service; power to resist temptation, power to live a holy life, power to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Last of all, the Word of God is the means of Christian *progress*. It will preserve us from the awful peril of backsliding, and will enable us to go forward in the Christian life from glory unto glory. Let it therefore be said again, that nothing can make up for failure to use Holy Scripture as a means of grace, for no one can exaggerate its power and blessing in "all things that pertain to life and godliness."

3. In order that the Bible may be a means of grace to us, we must ever bear in mind **the necessity and power of Meditation**. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. i. 8). "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. i. 2). "O how love I



Thy law ! it is my meditation all the day ” (Ps. cxix. 97). “ Search the Scriptures ” (John v. 39). What are we to understand by meditation ? Speaking generally, it is the brooding of mind, heart, and conscience over the Word of God. There are four elements in all true meditation. The first is *attention* ; the mind should be fixed on the verse or passage which we have before us. What does it mean ? What does it say ? How far do I understand it ? What did the writer intend ? The next element is *aspiration* ; the heart should turn the thought into a prayer and aspire towards God. Every promise is to be turned into a petition, every exhortation into an aspiration, every appeal into a longing desire to experience its full meaning. The third element of meditation is *application* ; the definite application to our own life and its present needs. What does this passage or verse say to *me* ? We must apply it to our own weaknesses, tendencies, past failures, and possibilities of danger. We should ask ourselves some such questions as these : What does this passage tell me of sin ? What does it reveal of Christ ? What does it say to my life now ? If there is a promise, we should appropriate it and trust God for the fulfilment. If there is a warning, we should heed it ; if there is a counsel, we should follow it. The last element of meditation is *action*—summing up everything. We must yield ourselves to God and seek His grace to put into practice what we have been taught in the secret of His presence. When these four elements are combined—attention, aspiration, application, action—we shall know what meditation means, and what it means profitably to hide God’s words in our hearts.

4. For the purpose of genuine Bible meditation and the full enjoyment of the power of the Word of God in our lives, it is essential to have **a plan of daily reading**. The Prayer Book offers us an admirable opportunity of becoming acquainted with Holy Scripture, and of experiencing its effects in our character and conduct.

(a) The daily lessons from the New Testament, read steadily day by day, will take us through the New Testament in one year. This should certainly be made a part of our Christian duty in relation to the Bible. The New Testament is pre-eminently that portion of the Word of God which we need to know and to follow in order to become intelligent, experienced, and spiritual followers of Christ.

(b) The daily lessons from the Old Testament will provide us with a very valuable selection covering a large part of the ground of the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. In biography and history, in proverb, psalm, and prophecy we shall find invaluable and indispensable helps to Christian living.

(c) The Sunday lessons from the Old Testament form a special

weekly opportunity of definite Bible meditation. A careful and prayerful study of these lessons week by week would add immeasurably to our knowledge and experience.

There is no Church in the world which offers to its members so large and varied an opportunity of Bible knowledge and study as we find in our Prayer Book.

In these days of Scripture Reading Unions there are other plans for definite daily meditation of the Word of God, but whatever method we may adopt, let us take care that we read and meditate according to a definite plan which will cover as much of the Bible as possible. In order that we may obtain a balanced and complete view of the revelation of God for human life, we must avoid limiting our attention to favourite passages and sections. The practical importance of daily Bible meditation may more readily be appreciated if we think of three daily needs of the body which are fit illustrations of the daily needs of the soul. Every one knows the necessity of some use of a looking-glass or mirror day by day for the due and proper appearance of the body. In like manner we need to look into the mirror of God's Word to see ourselves as God sees us, and in order to avoid appearing before our fellows in any other way than that which God would have us do (Jas. i. 23-25). Another obvious necessity day by day for our physical life is the use of water, and this again illustrates the need of that moral and spiritual cleansing of the soul which comes through a due and daily use of the Word of God (Eph. v. 26). Above all, the body must have its daily provision of food in order to maintain health and be protected from disease. So it is with the soul; the Word of God must be the food of the Christian heart if we would be in spiritual health, and do God spiritual service. We can now see something of what the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent means when it leads us to pray that God would enable us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Word of God.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### *MEANS OF GRACE—THE SACRAMENTS*

PRAYER and the Bible as means of grace may be said to cover all times and circumstances of the Christian life. They touch us at every point, and apply to all occasions of our fellowship with God. There are other means which are only available at particular times and under special circumstances, and these more public and occa-

sional means must now occupy our attention. Reserving for later consideration (see page 145) the question of public worship as a means of grace, we now consider those two Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to which the Church of England gives the name of Sacraments.

**I. The Sacraments in Scripture.**—We apply the term "Sacrament" to the two New Testament Ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which the Church regards as permanently binding on all Christians. Baptism was instituted by our Lord after the resurrection and just before He ascended into heaven, when He gave His great commission: "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The words imply, "Go, bring them into a new relation with Me." The Ordinance was therefore used in the planting of the Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and it is referred to in the Epistles as a necessary part of individual and Church life. It is there regarded as the occasion when the believer was accepted into and assumed a new relation to God, when he became united with and consecrated to Christ.

The Lord's Supper was instituted on the night of the Betrayal, as recorded in the first three Gospels. It was observed in the early Church, and is referred to in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (x and xi) as an integral part of Christian life.

These Ordinances in the New Testament are always connected with and subordinated to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It is through the Word of God and by the Spirit of God we are born again, built up in our most holy faith, and sanctified. The Holy Spirit is ever emphasized as the source and sustenance of the spiritual life, and these Ordinances are never separated from the Word and the Spirit, but always based on them as giving the key to their meaning and the explanation of their place and power. This is exactly the position given to Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Church of England, for both in the Holy Communion office and in the Ordinal the minister is invariably spoken of as "minister of the Word and Sacraments."

These two Ordinances are evidently intended to express and pledge in a visible form the blessings offered to us, and secured for us, by our Lord and received through faith in Him. Both Baptism and the Holy Communion are connected with the death of Christ and are associated with the Divine covenant of grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. Following and arising out of this expression of God's attitude of grace these Ordinances also express in a visible form the true relation of the believer to God. They are the signs and seals of a transaction already accomplished in the

union and consecration of the life to God. Then, following our relation to God, Baptism and the Lord's Supper naturally have an outlook towards the Church and express our union with other Christians, and the maintenance of that union in fellowship. This aspect, though not the primary idea of Sacraments in Scripture, necessarily and appropriately arises out of our individual relation to God.

The spiritual efficacy of these Ordinances is always conditional, and is not to be associated in any absolute way with the simple administration and application of them. They have no spiritual power of themselves apart from the Spirit of God on God's side and faith on our side. We can see this illustrated in missionary work abroad. Missionaries do not baptize and give the Holy Communion at once and indiscriminately, but only after teaching and instruction have afforded opportunities for faith in God. This great principle of the conditional blessings of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is at the very root of the Church of England teaching on the subject. It will be seen that our Prayer Book and Articles ever insist on Faith as the means and condition of blessing. This naturally brings us to consider our next point.

**2. The Sacraments in the Church of England.**—For the purpose of becoming acquainted with the teaching of our Church we must study carefully the first three Questions and Answers in the Catechism, and Article XXV.

*Q.* How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church ?

*A.* Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

*Q.* What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament* ?

*A.* I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

*Q.* How many parts are there in a Sacrament ?

*A.* Two : the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

“ Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges, or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him.

“ There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures ; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

“ The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation ; but they that receive them unworthily receive to themselves damnation as Saint *Paul* saith.”



A careful consideration of the statements of the Article will enable us to include all the teaching of the Church of England.

(a) The name "Sacrament." Although not a Scripture term, it is a useful and intelligible word by which to designate Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We use several words in general theological language like Incarnation, and others which, while not found in Scripture, are clear and adequate expressions of Scripture teaching. The word "Sacrament" originally meant the oath of allegiance taken by the Roman soldier on enlistment, and was, of course, regarded as a sacred and solemn promise (*sacra-mentum*). In this original meaning the word has a beautiful application to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, since they represent to us our allegiance to Christ and afford us opportunities of expressing this. During the Christian centuries the word has been used in various ways, but the Church of England now limits it to Ordinances which fulfil three requirements: (1) Those having an outward sign; (2) an inward grace; (3) ordained by Christ. This is the clear teaching of the Catechism and the Article.

(b) The nature of Sacraments. The Article speaks of them as "badges of Christian profession," that is, marks to distinguish Christians from non-Christians. This is pre-eminently true of converts in the mission field to-day, and is also specially applicable to communicant members as they partake of the Lord's Supper. Sacraments are also "sure witnesses of grace." They testify to the fact, reality, and blessing of God's presence in the world, and are a proclamation in visible form that Christ died to save, and offers His grace to all. The Article goes on to teach that Sacraments are "effectual signs of grace." A "sign" of grace is a proof, or seal, or pledge, of grace, and they are "effectual" because they do the work of signs effectually. They are *effectual as signs*. The adjective does not destroy the substantive in this phrase or make the latter into something else. The Sacraments are thus effectual or efficacious pledges or seals of grace, for the idea of a "sign" (*signum*) is not that of a channel or pipe, but that of a seal, or pledge, or guarantee, and as such they are effectual or efficacious because they have God's Divine word of pledge and guarantee behind them. They are exactly analogous to those visible things in Scripture which we find so frequently associated with the truths and promises of God. The rainbow was an effectual sign and pledge of God's faithfulness, and in like manner circumcision, the passover, Gideon's fleece, the brazen serpent, were all associated with some message from God, and pledged and sealed that message to the people concerned. These were all associated with God's Word, and like them, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are pictures of grace, promises of grace,

proofs of grace, pledges of grace. "Christian ordinances do not create the grace they signify, but simply witness to it and apply it. They are called in ecclesiastical language seals because they make valid by a divinely ordered act, a general fact in a particular case." <sup>1</sup>

(c) The purpose of Sacraments. The Article goes on to teach that Sacraments (1) are the means of God's invisible working in us, and that (2) they do this by "quicken" and then "confirming" faith. This twofold purpose is to be carefully noted. To "quicken" here means to stir up, animate, excite; and to "confirm" means to strengthen and establish the faith thus animated. The equivalent word in the Latin version of the Articles for "quicken" is "*excitat*," i.e. to excite, not to cause faith, but to stir up a faith which already exists by accepting God's Word of promise. Faith believes the promise, and the Sacraments testify, sign, and seal that promise, and thus animate and strengthen our faith.

(d) The number of Sacraments. Our Church clearly teaches that there are only two Ordinances to which this term is to be applied—Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord—because they alone fulfil the threefold condition required by the Catechism and the Article in its definition of a Sacrament. The other five ceremonies or rites mentioned in the Article are not to be called Sacraments because they do not, and cannot, fulfil these three requirements. The Church of England knows only two Sacraments—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

(e) The use of Sacraments. The Article clearly refers to an improper use, that is, an abuse of the Sacraments, and teaches us that they are to be "duly used" according to the Ordinance of Christ and as He commanded.

(f) The effect of Sacraments. The Article closes by referring to "worthy use" leading to "a wholesome effect or operation," that is, an effect conducive to spiritual health. Then by contrast we have the solemn teaching about an "unworthy reception" with the consequence of judgment to the one who thus receives. This distinction of worthy and unworthy reception is the key to the position of our Church, and clearly shows that the spiritual efficacy of these Ordinances is conditional on worthy reception, that is, reception by faith in Him whose Ordinances they are, and whose grace they represent and pledge. In the Books of the Homilies put forth by our Church in the sixteenth century for use in Parish Churches, Sacraments are defined as "visible signs to which are annexed promises," that is, they embody or confirm some promise of God for our life. If we believe the promise the sign assures us of grace

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany, *The Prayer Book and The Christian Life*, p. 117.

and seals it to us, so that in this faithful use of the Ordinance grace is received from God, but if we have no faith in the promise the sign alone is absolutely useless.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should carefully observe the Scripture and Prayer Book meaning and place of these holy Ordinances, never exalting them to a place where Scripture and our Church have not put them, and on the other hand, never depreciating them or thinking lightly of what has been ordained by our Lord for the use and benefit of His people. We shall see more clearly and in detail when we consider each Sacrament separately what is the particular meaning and message of each one, but it is necessary first of all to be quite clear as to the general idea of Sacraments, and how they become means of grace to the soul. They are beautifully simple as emblems and pledges of the love of God in Christ. They are wonderfully suggestive, expressing the need of the soul and assuring us of the supply of Divine grace to meet it. They are perfectly sufficient, eliciting and confirming our faith, and providing just that point of contact between the visible and invisible world which we need for our daily life.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### *MEANS OF GRACE—BAPTISM*

WE now proceed to the consideration of each Sacrament separately, and following the guidance of the Catechism we take up first of all the subject of Baptism.

I. It is of the utmost importance at the outset to discover **the meaning of Baptism**. What did our Lord intend by this Ordinance? What was its original and primary purpose as distinct from any spiritual results that arise out of it? It will help us to answer this question if we bear in mind that whenever the verb "to baptize" is mentioned in the New Testament it is always in the passive, or at least in the quasi-passive voice, and not the active, thereby indicating that Baptism is to be regarded first of all from the Divine side, and not the human. People are never told to baptize themselves, but to allow themselves to be baptized, and when the minister performs the act of Baptism he does so as God's representative, so that Baptism is primarily God's act towards us, not ours towards God. What this Divine act and attitude means we shall see presently, but it is of the first importance that we should have the thought clear in our mind that Baptism represents and sym-

bolizes God's movement towards us rather than our movement towards Him.

The precise meaning of Baptism is not defined in the New Testament, for the simple reason that the Ordinance was already familiar in our Lord's day. The Jews were in the habit of using water with actions that were associated with baptisms (Heb. ix. 10, Greek), and as is well known, John the Baptist had been administering this Ordinance for several months before our Lord commenced His ministry. The word and the thing were therefore perfectly familiar to the disciples, and we can only obtain a true idea of the meaning of the Ordinance by considering what was the underlying idea in all these various applications of it, and what is the special and unique idea connected with the Christian form of Baptism. The general and fundamental idea common to the Jewish Baptisms, the Baptism of John, and Christian Baptism is that of washing or purification; the word is sometimes rendered by "washing" and its cognates (Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38, 39). Associated with the word "to baptize" is a Greek preposition variously rendered in our English version by "into" (Rom. vi. 3); "unto" (Matt. iii. 11); "for" (Acts ii. 39); "in" (Matt. xxviii. 19). This variety of rendering is somewhat unfortunate, as the idea is best expressed by the phrase "with a view to," or "for the purpose of."

When we put these phrases together we get the idea of "ceremonial purification or symbolical washing with a view to some particular purpose," whether we think of the Jewish Baptisms, John's Baptism, or Christian Baptism. In the case of the Jewish Baptisms or Washings the High Priest received the application of water for the purpose of being consecrated to the Priesthood (Exod. xxix. 1, 4). In like manner the Levites were designated "unto" or "with a view to" their special work (Num. viii. 14). Similarly, the nation of Israel is said by St. Paul to have been baptized "unto" Moses (1 Cor. x. 2), and as we may easily remember, the Baptism of John was "unto" or "with a view to" remission of sins. Thus, the general root idea underlying Baptism is *designation* or *purpose*, and so it is in Christian Baptism. St. Paul asked the half-instructed disciples at Ephesus, "Unto what were ye baptized?" that is, What was the purpose of your Baptism, wherein was its special designation? This, too, is clearly the meaning of our Lord when He instituted Christian Baptism with "Baptizing them *unto*, or with a view to, the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). The Name of God is the revelation of His character, and therefore Christian Baptism means that we are designated for and intended to enter into union and fellowship with all that is revealed and known of the nature and character of God. In the



same way we read of the Apostle Peter inviting and urging repentance and Baptism on the Day of Pentecost "with a view to remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38, 39).

Baptism then, in its primary meaning, is a symbolical act by which God designates us for union with Himself and for our reception and enjoyment of all the blessings included in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is thus a witness of God's act and attitude of condescending mercy in Christ and a pledge of His grace towards us. It is, as we have already seen, a visible sign to which is annexed a promise, and an assurance of God's favour and gracious goodness towards us.

It is very necessary to keep clear before our minds this fundamental idea of Baptism from the *Divine* side before we proceed to consider the human response and the duties involved in the Ordinance. Far too frequently the Ordinance is viewed almost exclusively from our standpoint, as though it were almost entirely a matter of personal profession and duty. As a matter of fact, the outward profession of Jesus Christ is never associated with the Ordinance of Baptism in the New Testament. Confession of Christ covers the whole of our Christian life, and cannot be associated with, and certainly not limited to, one Ordinance only, whether at the commencement or during the course of our Christian experience. When once we have thus realized the Divine meaning of Baptism, and when God's message of love and grace is truly accepted by the soul through faith in Christ, then indeed there come the experience of blessings and the consciousness of obligation in response to the Divine assurance of grace.

**2. The Meaning of Baptism in the Prayer Book.**—In Article XXVII, which is the clear and careful theological statement of Church doctrine on this subject, the primary meaning of Baptism from the Divine point of view is clearly evident.

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

In the Catechism the human side is necessarily brought more prominently to view, because it is part of the instruction of one who has already been baptized, and who consequently requires instruction on those matters involved and implied in the promises of God's grace.

*Q.* What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?

*A.* Water; wherein the person is baptized *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

*Q.* What is the inward and spiritual grace ?

*A.* A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness : for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

Combining both Article and Catechism we have the following summary of teaching on Baptism.

(a) It is a mark of Christian discipleship. How true this is the Mission Field to-day bears abundant witness. From the moment a man or woman is baptized there often come ostracism, persecution, and even death. It is indeed a "mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others."

(b) It is also a sign of regeneration or new birth. The word "sign" again comes before us as in Article XXV, with its meaning of pledge, seal, proof, assurance, guarantee.

(c) The results of Baptism are also brought before us in the Article, namely, "grafting into the Church," and God's promises of forgiveness and adoption signed and sealed. The confirmation of faith, and an increase of faith through prayer, are also said to accompany the Ordinance when rightly used. In the Catechism all this is more definitely stated from the standpoint of the benefit we receive when it speaks of "the inward and spiritual grace" as "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."

**3. The Conditions of Baptism.**—We notice the significant phrase in Article XXVII: "They that receive Baptism rightly." The Church evidently implies that it is possible to receive Baptism wrongly, thus bringing to view what we have already seen in Article XXV, the distinction between right reception and use and that which is unworthy and wrong. In exact accordance with this we read in the Catechism—

*Q.* What is required of persons to be baptized ?

*A.* Repentance, whereby they forsake sin ; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.

Following the teaching of the New Testament, Repentance and Faith are required of all who are to be baptized. At this point it is important to notice that Baptism must first of all be considered from the standpoint of adults. We shall see presently the precise grounds upon which the Baptism of children is observed. Meanwhile, we must keep before us what may be called the normal and necessarily earliest form of Baptism, its reception by those of adult age. This is the way in which both the Article and the Catechism approach and deal with the subject. This was necessarily the case when the Gospel was first preached, as it is still the case in heathen lands, and it is to be specially noticed that our faith is associated with "the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament."

Again we see the value and truth of that definition of the Homily, "a visible sign to which is annexed a promise." The Apostle, on the Day of Pentecost, said to those who were anxious and had cried out, "What shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized." There is no mention of faith here, because they had evidently shown their faith in what he had said by their earnest and anxious question. When, on the other hand, we turn to the story of the Philippian jailer who asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer given was; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." No mention of repentance is found here, because it is evident that he had already repented, and was very soon baptized. Thus, God's grace is offered to us on the condition of our acceptance through repentance and personal trust in Christ. These are the essential and universal conditions of all Christian Baptism.

4. **The Subjects of Baptism.**—The only question on this point is as to the Baptism of infants and young children, and on this it is necessary to be perfectly clear as to the grounds on which we believe infants have a right to be baptized. Article XXVII, after telling us what Baptism means generally and with reference to those who are able to exercise faith, goes on to say that: "The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." This is the sole and sufficient reason for infant Baptism, its essential agreement with our Lord's purpose in instituting Christian Baptism as recorded in the great commission: "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them with a view to the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). Baptism was therefore associated with discipleship, and as little children can become disciples of Christ and enter into true relation with God, we can readily see that the Article is abundantly warranted in speaking of Infant Baptism as "most agreeable with the institution of Christ." We baptize both adults and infants with the purpose of their coming into possession of everything implied in the name of God. They are thus designated for the purpose of receiving and experiencing, not as already in possession. The only question is whether young children may be regarded as disciples, or learners, and whether they can become so. In view of our Lord's words, "Of such (little children) is the Kingdom of Heaven," it is impossible to doubt that children are capable of union with Christ. The great atoning sacrifice of Calvary included unconscious childhood as well as conscious manhood and womanhood in its wondrous efficacy and blessing, and the Baptism of young children is our constant and beautiful witness to this great fact of childhood's essential relation to God. As we shall have occasion to deal with this subject

more at length (on p. 261) we need not dwell upon the matter further, except to call attention to the significant words of the Catechism as to the Baptism of children.

*Q.* Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?

*A.* Because they promise them both by their Sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

It will be seen from this answer that the Church makes no distinction between the conditions of Baptism for Infants and Adults. In the latter case, Baptism is conditional on Repentance and Faith, and the infant is baptized as being included in the covenant of grace with their parents who are assumed to be Christians. The Apostle Peter, preaching on the Day of Pentecost, distinctly said that the promise is "to you and to your children," and we find in the Acts of the Apostles whole households baptized where only the faith of the head of the household is mentioned (Acts xvi. 33, Greek). There is such a thing as the solidarity of life and privilege in connexion with Christian people and their children. From the time of Abraham onward infants have been admitted into God's covenant of grace. Abraham himself as an adult believed first and then received the sign of the covenant; but in the case of his son, Isaac, the sign came first and the faith followed in due course. The child thus received and welcomed is in due time taught and influenced by Sureties, and on the occasion of Confirmation the whole spiritual privilege and blessing should be realized as a conscious possession.

We are thus enabled to understand the real meaning of Baptism in the New Testament and the Prayer Book in its beautiful symbolism expressive of God's attitude to us in Christ, and of all the blessings and obligations that come out of our relation to Him. Our faith lays hold of God's promises made to us in the Sacrament of Baptism, and as we trust Him for the fulfilment, the remembrance of the Ordinance brings with it a reminder that God will be true to His word and will bestow and maintain the grace He has pledged Himself to give us in Christ. We shall do well to recall to our mind continually what Baptism means, and especially its blessed and personal assurance to every believer of grace sufficient for every need. The whole meaning and power of Baptism, whether in the New Testament or in the Prayer Book, cannot be better summed up than in the words of the great Archbishop Ussher, one of the noblest names and most representative authorities of the Church of England in the seventeenth century:

"As Baptism administered to those of years is not effectual unless they believe, so we can make no comfortable use of our baptism administered in our infancy until we believe. All the promises of grace were in my Baptism



estated upon me, and sealed up unto me on God's part ; but then I come to have the profit and benefit of them when I come to understand what grant God in Baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually lay hold on it by faith." <sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XXIX

### MEANS OF GRACE—THE LORD'S SUPPER

THERE are several ways in which the Supper of the Lord may be considered, and some of these will come before us later. At present we are concerned with that holy Ordinance as a means of grace and mainly in relation to the individual Christian life.

1. **The Meaning of the Lord's Supper.**—Our Lord instituted the Communion on the eve of His Crucifixion. At the close of the usual Passover meal He took bread, and having blessed God, gave it to His disciples. He then took wine, and having given thanks to God, gave it in like manner, telling His disciples that they were to observe this in remembrance of Him. The primary and fundamental meaning, therefore, of the Lord's Supper is Remembrance of Him. It is to be observed in memory of Him as our Saviour, Master, and Lord. It is to assist our remembrance, and the remembrance is specially connected with His Death. The Lord said as He gave the bread, " This is My Body which is being broken for you " (Greek), and as He gave the wine He said, " This cup is the new covenant in My Blood which is being poured out for you " (Greek). In close adherence to this New Testament teaching our Catechism asks the question—

" Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained ? "

and gives the answer—

" For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

That is, the benefits received by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This thought of remembrance of our Lord and His Sacrificial Death must ever be kept prominently before the mind as the first, greatest, and most important part of our Lord's purpose in instituting this Sacrament. As in the old days the Passover was appointed to be observed year by year in memory of God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and its bondage, so in like manner our Lord at the Passover time instituted the Supper as a constant reminder of His deliverance of us from the bondage of sin by the Sacrifice of His Death. So that if we are asked to-day, as Jewish parents were expected to be

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Confirmation Lectures*, by A. E. Barnes-Lawrence, M.A., p. 48.

asked, "What mean ye by this service?" we reply: the continual remembrance of our Lord's Sacrifice and of the blessings that come to our souls through His precious Blood then shed.

As a consequence of this spiritual remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ we naturally have fellowship with God in the appropriation of the blessings and benefits of our Lord's death, and so St. Paul teaches us that "the cup of blessing which we bless" is the "communion (fellowship) of the blood of Christ," and "the bread which we break" is "the communion of the body of Christ" (1 Cor. x. 16). This fellowship with our fellow-Christians, or "joint participation", results in spiritual grace being received by the soul. The outward part or sign is bread and wine, the inward part or spiritual meaning and blessing of the Ordinance is "the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," and the benefits which come to us through our fellowship with God in this Holy Supper are "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine." Thus we may see that the Lord's Supper witnesses to two things: (1) Remembrance of our Lord as One Who is bodily absent. (2) Fellowship with our Lord as One Who is spiritually present.

Arising out of our relation to God is our necessary relation to our fellow-Christians. The Lord's Supper was celebrated by a company of our Lord's disciples, not by each one of them separately and alone, and in like manner to-day the Communion is intended for united and corporate observance and use. It thus becomes a bond of union between Christians and an opportunity of expressing their fellowship in their One Lord and Master. "We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). When we thus unite together and take part in the Lord's Supper, we proclaim our trust and confidence in the Sacrifice of Christ and in Him Who died on the Cross, and at the same time we testify to our unity of life and love as members of His Church, the Body of Christ.

As the crown of all this, the future also enters into the observance of the Lord's Supper. The Lord Jesus Himself, at the institution, told His disciples that He would not drink with them of the fruit of the vine until He should drink it new with them in His Father's Kingdom (Matt. xxvi. 29), and in keeping with this teaching the Apostle Paul teaches us that "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Our faith looks back on Calvary as the Bread is broken and the Wine poured out; our love looks up to the Throne and holds fellowship and sweet communion as we appropriate to our-

selves the spiritual benefits of our Lord's redemption ; our hope looks forward to the Day of our Master's Coming as we, in union with our fellow-Christians, " do this in remembrance of Him " " until the day dawn and the shadows flee away."

Thus the whole of our Christian life and experience may be said to be summed up, symbolized, and expressed in the Supper of the Lord. The three great truths of Union, Communion, and Reunion are all found here, and Past, Present, and Future are all beautifully included and summed up in this Holy Ordinance. We remember our Lord, we appropriate Him, we confess Him, and we expect Him. The Lord's Supper appeals to every part of our nature ; to our intellect, to our imagination, to our heart, to our conscience, to our soul, to our will, to our life, to our social instincts, and to our steadfast hope. Truly, then, it is a means of grace. Our souls are undoubtedly strengthened with the power and grace of God, and refreshed by the joy and peace and hope of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour.

**2. The Relation of the Outward and the Inward Parts of the Lord's Supper.**—Our Church always clearly distinguishes between the outward and the inward parts of the Lord's Supper, otherwise it could not possibly be a Sacrament according to the definition of the Catechism and the Article. This distinction is plainly seen in the language of the Catechism already quoted, and it is also as evidently brought before us in Article XXVIII. In the Holy Communion Service we are said to receive " these Thy creatures of Bread and Wine," and we pray to be made " partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood." The words of administration said to the communicant make the same clear distinction. First the minister speaks of " the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which *was given for thee*," and " the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which *was shed for thee*," clearly referring to the Sacrifice of our Lord, the inward part or thing signified in the Holy Communion. Then he says, " Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee." " Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee." This clear distinction between the outward and the inward is maintained from first to last in our Communion Service. The prayer of Consecration which immediately precedes the reception of the Holy Communion teaches the same truth. The bread and wine are then set apart or consecrated for the special purpose of being taken, eaten and drunk as symbols, pledges, and seals to the faithful communicant of the grace of God in Christ. Consecration involves no change in the substance of the bread and wine, only a change of use and purpose, the ordinary bread and wine being thus separated from common use for the purpose already indicated. There are thus two

givers in the Holy Communion ; the minister gives the elements which are received into the body, the Lord gives direct from heaven His own grace and power, "The Body and Blood of Christ," and these are received into the soul. These two gifts are never to be identified or confused. The minister cannot possibly give the Body and Blood of Christ, for this is a spiritual act which the Lord Jesus Christ has never delegated, and cannot delegate, to any human being. In the case of worthy receivers, the reception of the wine and bread into the body, and the grace of our Lord into the soul, are always parallel and concurrent, but never identical. Our faith must, therefore, be ever occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ ; the visible sign of Bread and Wine has annexed to it the promise of grace and blessing, and if only our faith looks up to Christ on the Throne and feeds upon Him in our hearts, blessing always comes. We can see this truth still more plainly set before us in Article XXIX.

"The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint *Augustine* saith), the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ ; but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing."

With this distinction between the outward and inward parts we naturally come now to consider.—

**3. The Requirements for Holy Communion.**—We have already seen how the Church of England lays stress on the distinction between worthy and unworthy reception of Sacraments. Let us, however, remind ourselves once more of this important truth. The Catechism teaches that "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the *faithful*." Article XXV says, "In such only as worthily receive the same (viz. the Sacraments) they have a wholesome effect or operation : but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint *Paul* saith." Article XXVIII speaks of those who receive the Lord's Supper "rightly, worthily, and with faith." It also says,

"The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith."

This is evidently the keynote of the teaching of our Church. With the elements administered and received is associated God's promise of grace and spiritual blessing, and faith is required in order to grasp the promise and accept the blessing. In the absence of any trust in God the mere reception of the Elements has no efficacy whatever, but rather tends to our spiritual condemnation. This is what St. Paul meant when he said, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body



and Blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27). The Church Catechism therefore rightly and necessarily asks—

"What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?"

"To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His Death; and be in Charity with all men."

Following St. Paul's counsel (1 Cor. xi. 28), we are taught to examine *ourselves*. This is the true and healthy way of spiritual preparation; the careful consideration by each soul in secret with God of the true meaning of this Holy Ordinance and of our spiritual life in relation to it. This examination of ourselves is concerned with three special points—

(a) Repentance: including true sorrow for past sins and steadfast determination for future life.

(b) Faith: including a living trust in the mercy of God and personal thankfulness for the Sacrifice of Christ.

(c) Love: including charitable feelings and loving actions to all men.

This instruction as to due preparation for Holy Communion is exemplified in the Ante-Communion Service which is built up on this threefold plan of Repentance, Faith, and Love. The Service opens with the recital of the Commandments followed by the expression of our sorrow and prayer for grace to lead a new life. Faith is emphasized by the reading of God's message in the Epistle and Gospel, followed by our profession of Faith in the Creed. Love is brought before us in the prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church on Earth, together with our practical proof of it in the Alms and other Offerings given to the poor. Thus wisely, beautifully, and well does our Church prepare us by her Services for due and worthy participation in the Supper of the Lord; and as if this were not sufficient, and in order to make still more sure that due self-preparation is undertaken, each Exhortation in the Communion Service brings definitely before the Communicants the needs of Repentance, Faith, and Love, and then, to crown all this, Repentance, Trust and Love find expression in the solemn Confession, the Absolution, the Comfortable Words, and the subsequent Thanksgiving to God. So we can say at Holy Communion—

"My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Saviour Divine."

Faith remembers Calvary and finds peace with God. Faith rests on Him Who once died and Who now lives for ever. Faith receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as the indwelling Divine Fount of holiness.

Faith realizes our fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Faith rejoices in our Lord Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, and the language of the adoring, trusting, grateful soul is "O my God, Thou art true! O my soul, thou art happy."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XXX

### CONFIRMATION

WE have been considering the Christian life almost entirely in its individual aspects, and as it concerns the relation of the soul to God. The instruction provided for us in the Catechism and the guidance there given naturally lead up to and express themselves in the Rite of Confirmation, which affords to the individual an opportunity for the confession of his discipleship, and at the same time an occasion of union with others who are similarly related to God. This opportunity comes at an age when the consciousness of what life means becomes more and more vivid and definite; when the days of boyhood and girlhood are practically at an end, and when the young soul is—

"Standing with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet."

The instructions and influences of childhood thus culminate in a solemn and beautiful act of dedication of ourselves to God, and in a profession before others that we desire and determine to be His for ever. At the same time, it is of necessity also an opportunity for realizing afresh God's presence and His Divine attitude to us in the covenant of grace, and also of receiving and appropriating His Spirit<sup>2</sup> of power in order to realize our responsibilities in actual living day by day. To the soul that comes in faith and love God comes in power and blessing. If we on our part say, "The desire of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 8), the experience will soon follow, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways" (Isa. lxiv. 5). The gift of the Holy Spirit is assured to those who ask in faith, nothing wavering, and in the possession of the Holy Spirit is perfect provision for every circumstance of life.

Yet again, Confirmation affords the privilege and opportunity of

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, vol. v, chap. 67.

<sup>2</sup> It is not implied here that the Holy Spirit is not given and received until Confirmation, or only through Confirmation. The actual Confirmation Prayer of the bishop assumes that the Candidate already has the Spirit.—A. M. S.

entering into fellowship with those who, like ourselves, have been brought into personal contact and spiritual relation with Christ. Confirmation is thus the gateway to full membership in the Church of England, and to all the benefits of Church fellowship, so that it means—

- (a) Consecration to God.
- (b) Communication with and from God.
- (c) Communion with the people of God.

A careful consideration of the Order of Confirmation in the Prayer Book will bring these points still more clearly before us.

1. **The Title.**—The Service is described as “The Laying on of Hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion.” It is thus the complement of Baptism, and is clearly intended only for those who know the spiritual meaning of the rite, those who have come to years of knowledge.

2. **The Opening Address.**—In harmony with the characteristic purpose of the Church of England to give clear instruction in the meaning of its Services these opening words tell us what our Church intends by Confirmation. In order that Confirmation may be of spiritual use and edification, “The Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other questions as in the short Catechism are contained.” “The Church” in this passage means the Church of England, and “hereafter” refers to the time when this Confirmation Service was drawn up in the sixteenth century, when our Prayer Book was compiled. At that time the Church of England struck out a new line for itself with reference to Confirmation. Up to then it had not been the custom for those who had been confirmed to be able to say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to answer questions from the Catechism. Young people were confirmed long before they could be said to have come to the years of discretion, and so the Church of England determined henceforth to lay stress on intelligent understanding and hearty participation in the meaning of the Ordinance.

This Order is said to be—

“Very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they by their own confession, have assented unto.”

In these words we have the active and personal side of the Christian life brought before us. The one who is to be confirmed

first of all confirms the promises of his Baptism, and promises to carry out what was involved in those Baptismal vows.

**3. The First Part of the Service.**—This also brings before us the human side of the Christian religion. It ends with the words "I do." The Bishop asks each one the personal question, in the presence of all those gathered together, whether the candidate, speaking in the presence of God, fully intends to carry out what was meant and implied in his Baptism, and what is really involved in the fact of being a Christian. The answer is expected to come audibly from each one, "I do."

**4. The Second Part of the Service.**—At once we are reminded of the Divine side of the Christian life, and this is the predominant note of the rest of the Service. The words "I do" are hardly out of the mouths of the candidates when the Bishop recalls to them the only source of strength: "Our help is in the Name of the Lord," and every prayer that follows in the Confirmation Service is noticeable for two things: (a) The appeal to God as "Almighty and Everliving," and thus able and ready to do for the life all that is needed. (b) The petition for the Holy Spirit as the sole source of power, enlightenment, grace, and blessing. Nothing can well be more remarkable and significant than this prominence given to the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Apostolic words, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

**5. The Laying on of Hands.**—The words of the Bishop give the true meaning of this part of the Rite. He is said to lay his hands "after the example of Thy Holy Apostles," and the purpose is stated as "to certify them by this sign of Thy favour and gracious goodness towards them." We thus retain the exact form of the Apostolic action, but with a different purpose. From the Acts of the Apostles we know that the Apostles laid their hands on the people, and by their unique Apostolic power imparted miraculous spiritual gifts; but while the Church has preserved the outward form and symbol the meaning is, as the Bishop's words clearly show it to be, "to certify them of God's favour towards them." Laying on of hands is well known in Scripture in connexion with benediction and blessing. We remember how Jacob laid his hands in blessing on the sons of Joseph; how Moses laid his hands on Joshua in blessing and commission to his new and high office. In the same way the Bishop, as the chief pastor of the Church, lays his hands upon those who are to be confirmed to assure them of God's benediction upon their life, and prays that God's Fatherly hand may ever be over them, and His Holy Spirit ever with them.

Thus the two sides of the Christian life are beautifully brought before us in the Order of Confirmation. We confirm, and God con-



firms. We testify our repentance and faith and our determination to live to His praise and glory, and He bears witness through His servant, the Bishop, that in answer to prayer the Holy Spirit shall be given in all His Divine sufficiency for our daily needs. We can therefore easily see the untold value and spiritual blessing of Confirmation as—

- (1) An opportunity of instruction in Christ.
- (2) An opportunity of decision for Christ.
- (3) An opportunity of confession of Christ.
- (4) An opportunity of blessing from Christ.
- (5) An opportunity of communion with Christ and His people.

If we enter upon our Confirmation in this spirit we shall assuredly reap abundant blessing and receive the grace assured and sealed to us in our Baptism, whereby to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus ii. 12).

PART II

THE CATHOLIC FAITH AND  
CHURCH LIFE



# THE CHURCH

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHURCH

CONFIRMATION, as we have seen, introduces us to full communion with our fellow-Christians, and emphasizes that blending of the individual and social aspects of the Christian life which are necessary to the full realization of the meaning of Christianity. Our individual life must of necessity be first of all put right with God, but our life touches other lives which are in the same position before God as our own, and consequently the very fact that we and they are thus spiritually related to God involves us in a very definite and responsible relation to one another.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In saving the first individual sinner our Lord united that one to Himself. But He saves "sinners," and so one by one sinners are united to Him. Since they all have a relation to Christ, it follows that they have some relation to one another. There is, consequently, a society of believers, and this is a necessary outcome of our Lord's work of redemption, the formation of a Society of those who are in direct relation to Himself, a Society of saved sinners.

This Society is given several titles in the New Testament, and its life and purpose are expressed by several symbolical terms. But the most important for our present purpose is the "Church." It is of all titles the most characteristic of the present dispensation.

At the outset let us note two points with reference to the word "Church." (1) The English word "Church" is a corruption of a Greek word (*κυριακή*), which means "that which belongs to the Lord." When put into English words we have its nearest equivalent in the Scottish word "Kirk." (2) The Greek word (*ἐκκλησία*, *Ecclesia*), which is translated "Church," means an assembly, people called together. We must now betake ourselves to the New Testament to learn the true doctrine of the Church. For all that is essential as distinct from what is purely circumstantial and local we naturally turn to the inspired Scriptures.

**I. The Commencement of the Church.**—Two questions need attention.

(a) When did the Church commence? We generally speak of the Day of Pentecost as the birthday of the Church. This is hardly correct, for the Church really began when those two of John's disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus (John i. 37).<sup>1</sup> Yet the Day of Pentecost may be rightly regarded as the birthday of

<sup>1</sup> In a very real sense the Church had already existed in the Old Testament as the chosen people of Israel (*cf.* Acts vii. 38).—G. W. B.



the Church in its present organized form, the day when it was fully constituted by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

(b) How did it commence?—We read of one hundred and twenty disciples (Acts i. 15) filled with the Holy Ghost, bearing testimony to the Word of God (Acts ii. 4), with the ultimate result that through the preaching of St. Peter three thousand accepted Christ, and so became united to Him and to one another in Him. It is important to note the precise order of events : Christ preached—Christ accepted—Christ adding them to the Church. The one hundred and twenty forming the original nucleus of disciples performed two ministerial acts ; they testified, and they baptized. But between these two acts there was the direct contact of each individual penitent believer with God, by means of faith on man's side, and the Holy Spirit on God's side. It is Christ Who places us in the Church, not the Church who places us in Christ. Uniting us to Christ is a spiritual work which only the Spirit can do. The Church is ministerial and instrumental in preaching Christ and accepting us into visible fellowship. Faith comes first, and then fellowship.

We must study carefully Acts ii. if we would know what the Church is and does. That chapter contains the germ, the foundation, the pattern of all that follows in the New Testament about the Church.

2. **The Purpose of the Church.**—Why was the Church called into existence? Generally we may say that the purpose of the Church is to glorify God (Eph. iii. 10 ; 1 Pet. ii. 9), but looking at the subject from the human side we may consider the following particulars—

(a) For Fellowship. It was the natural and necessary expression and result of the disciples' new relation to Christ, the expression of that life in a social form. It satisfied the social instinct, and from the very first Christianity has made much of social fellowship. There is nothing clearer and more emphatic in the New Testament than the reality and power of Church life and fellowship (Acts ii. 42-6).

(b) For Testimony. The Church was formed for the purpose of witnessing for Christ in the world. The world had rejected Christ, and so He left the Church as a witness in hope of the world's repentance and acceptance of Himself (Acts i. 8, iv. 31-3 ; 1 Pet. ii. 9).

(c) For Service. There was work to be done. The lives of the Christians had to be deepened and matured by teaching, and the Kingdom of God had to be extended by preaching. Extension and Instruction formed the twofold work of the Church (Eph. iii. 14-19 ; Col. i. 25-29).

We see, therefore, the great value of the Church. It is true that

each man is saved solitarily and alone by direct contact as an individual with Christ, but it is equally true that he is sanctified in association with others. Our first and earliest influences and lessons were received at home. This was our first Church. Then came the school, and later the congregation. These were our guides, and we can easily realize the value of instruction and influence of prayer, Bible and worship which we have derived from our earliest association with Christian people. It must be constantly borne in mind that the true, full, vigorous, mature Christian life is impossible to any Christian who tries to live a solitary life. Individual Christianity can easily be carried to extremes, and become something very different from the Christianity of the New Testament. The Christian must realize in some way "the Communion of Saints" if he is to be a true saint himself. Paul prayed that the Christians of Ephesus might comprehend "with all saints" the love of Christ (Eph. iii. 18), each saint apprehending a little and all together comprehending that which is intended for the whole Church.

**3. The Growth of the Church.**—As we trace the progress of the Church in the New Testament we find a threefold use of the word "Church."

(a) The local use. The Church in a house or a city. This refers to the Christians of one place.

(b) The general use. The aggregate or total of Churches at one time in different places (1 Cor. x. 32; xii. 28).

(c) The universal use. The Church considered as universal, embracing all places and times (Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18).

We may here note that the Prayer Book follows closely this usage.

(a) The local use. "The Church hath thought good to order." See the Preface of Confirmation Service. This clearly means the Church of England, for the "Order" referred to is hers alone.

(b) The general use. "The Church hath power to decree." See Article XX. This refers to the Church in general at any given time.

(c) The universal use. "Who hast built Thy Church" (see the Collect for St. Simon and St. Jude's Day). "Thine elect in one communion and fellowship" (Collect for All Saints' Day).

It will be found that in the New Testament and Prayer Book all uses of the word "Church" will fall under one or other of these heads.

In all this it is important to realize very carefully three things—

(1) The Church is never to be limited to any officials. The "Church" is the whole body of Christians. Men about to be ordained are sometimes said to be entering "the Church." This is not the case. They are entering the *ministry*. Usage like this clearly shows how thought and language are apt to degenerate into

misconception and error. The Church is "the blessed company of all faithful people," whether in one place, or at one time, or considered in the widest sense of the term.

(2) The growth of the organization of the Church was gradual, and varied with particular circumstances. There is no hint of any one precise form of organization or government. Development and outward form came from within, as befitted a spiritual body expressing its life in earthly forms. As the need arose for this or that office, this or that function, the need was met. There was nothing fixed, and everything was elastic in the true sense, and grew according to the requirements of a spiritual community.

(3) The Church, as we can clearly understand, is at once visible and invisible. Article XIX speaks of "the visible Church," thereby implying also the Church as invisible. These two words, "visible" and "invisible," represent the Church in two aspects, according as it is viewed inwardly or outwardly, according to spiritual nature or according to earthly organization. The Church is visible as to those who compose it, but invisible as to its Divine Head and the Spirit of its life. The two aspects are necessarily connected, but they do not cover exactly the same ground. A man may belong to the Church as visible without belonging to the Church as invisible. He may be united to the outward society of Christians without being spiritually united to Christ. But it is also true, according to the New Testament, that a man will not belong to the Church as invisible without belonging to the visible Church. A man in Christ will join himself to other Christians. Christians living and working alone, apart from brethren, are quite unknown to the New Testament. They are there depicted as all united in fellowship and included in the Church of Christ, "the blessed company of all faithful people." A purely individualistic Christian life is an utter impossibility.

**4. The Characteristics of the Church.**—Such then was the Church, according to the New Testament, its start, its progress, and purpose. But it is possible for some one to be saying: We are now more than nineteen centuries from that time; where is the Church to-day? Where can I find a Church that answers to the Church of the New Testament? This question is an important one, and must be answered. It is also a necessary one, and *can* be answered. Where, then, may we find it? The answer may be given in the familiar words, "I believe One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church." Wherever you can find a company of Christians who answer to the proper meaning of these terms, there you will find a part of the Church of Christ. These titles are called the "Notes" or marks of the Church.

(a) The Unity of the Church. "One." This means, first, Union

of the soul with Christ by the Holy Spirit. Then comes Unity of life in Christ through the Spirit, and Unity of doctrine in Christ through the Spirit. The Unity is that of Eph. iv. 4-6. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one Baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." The Church is a *congregation*, not an *aggregation*. It is a community of those who have Christ as the centre and source of life and unity. This Unity is not to be confused with Unanimity of opinion on every point. This is manifestly impossible. Nor is Unity to be identified with Uniformity of Usages and Forms of Worship. Unity means Life. Uniformity often means Death. Nor is it to be limited to a Unit of Organization. That is an absolute impossibility, remembering differences of time, place, nations, and races in the Church. Our Lord clearly distinguishes (John x. 16, R.V.) between the unity of the *fold* and the unity of the *flock*, and clearly teaches us that the latter is essential and important, and that the former is but secondary and temporary. True unity can exist and flourish without absolute uniformity of opinion and custom, or without needing a unit of organization, because it is a unity of Life, Nature, Teaching, and Purpose in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

(b) The Sanctity of the Church. "Holy." "Holy" means "consecrated," i.e. separated from sin and dedicated to God. It is a title used in the New Testament to describe all Christians (Rom. i. 1, and elsewhere). Holiness, as we have seen, is the purpose of God for all Christians. Holiness is the work of the Spirit of God. Wherever we find one whose life is evidently manifesting the fruit of the Spirit of Holiness, there we find a member of the Church of Christ. So far, and only so far, as individual members are "holy" can the visible Church be called by this title. Strictly and in completeness it can be predicated only of the Church as invisible and as fully realizing God's purpose.

(c) The Universality of the Church. "Catholic." Catholic means "universal," and the Church as Catholic means the Church as embracing all times, all places, all people, all truth. It is as our Prayer Book has it, "the whole state of Christ's Church," "the blessed company of all faithful people." It is an *inclusive* term, applying to all "who profess and call themselves Christians." The word is therefore very appropriate as testifying to the world-wide extension of the Gospel in the purpose of God. Christianity is intended for all men, and all Christians form the Catholic Church. The sole use of the term "Catholic" by any one body of Christians

<sup>1</sup> For this reason the primary goal of movements for Church Union should be full intercommunion rather than complete fusion.—G. W. B.



is obviously a contradiction in terms, and an utter impossibility. The Church Catholic *is* the Church Catholic, not any one Church, however large or well known.

(d) The Apostolicity of the Church. "Apostolic." It is so called because it is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone," because the Apostles first preached the Gospel whereby men became united to Christ and to one another in Him. The Church thus founded through Apostles is still guided by the Apostles in their writings, which we have in the New Testament. The Apostolicity of the Church is therefore characterized by loyal agreement with the truths they preached and the life they lived and enjoined. The guarantee of Apostolicity is not an outward succession in the Apostolic ministry, but adherence to Apostolic doctrine, worship and life.

These, then, are the Characteristics or "Notes" of the Church of Christ—Oneness, Holiness, Catholicity, Apostolicity, and they are illustrated for us all through the Prayer Book.

And when we say "*I believe*," we testify that the Church is not in its essence a matter of sight, but of faith. The true meaning and use of the Creeds is found in the obvious meaning of faith as belief in that which we do not see. The entire Catholic Church of Christ is not visible to us, and cannot be, but we confess our belief in its existence as consisting of God's elect knit together in one communion and fellowship.

All this is summed up in the well-known words, "where Christ is, there is the Church." If it be asked where Christ is, the answer is, Where the Holy Spirit is, for He alone has the power to make Christ real to men. And if it be further asked where the Holy Spirit is, the Holy Spirit is known by His fruit, by His grace and power in hearts and lives. If a man wishes to know where Christ is he will have no difficulty in finding Him.

The practical bearing of this is twofold—

(1) **We must not overrate** the position and importance of the Church. It is only too possible to do this. But it will mean spiritual loss and disaster. If we exalt the Church we are likely to forget Christ. High views of the Church often mean low views of Christ. If we emphasize the Church as the depository of grace we tend to neglect Christ as the Source of grace. If we place the Church between the sinner and the Saviour we may easily shut Christ out of that sinner's view. But if we exalt Christ the Church finds her proper place. If we honour Christ we shall value the Church aright.

(2) **We must not underrate** the position and importance of the Church. It is only too easy to do this. But this too will mean spiritual loss. The individual Christian needs the Church for fellow-

ship, growth, love, and progress. The world needs the Church for witness and blessing. We must therefore honour the Church, value her life, further her progress, and enable her to realize God's purpose. We must foster Church life, Church unity, Church fellowship in every possible way. We must pray for the Church, that she may realize her high calling and glorify God before the world. Thus shall we be Churchpeople in the truest sense, members of the family of God, branches of the Vine, members of the Body, and stones in the Living Temple.

## CHAPTER II

### *THE CHURCH IN HISTORY—(I)*

WE have seen that our Lord's work of redemption necessarily involved the formation of a society of those who are in spiritual relation to Himself, and we have noticed some of the aspects of the life of this society as recorded in the pages of the New Testament. Moreover, we have observed that the teaching of our Prayer Book is in close accord with the New Testament teaching on the Church, and that the Church of England is therefore an integral part of the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

We must now trace the outline of the history of the Christian Church in order to see how the society, of whose origin we read in the New Testament, grew and spread until at length it reached our shores and took root in our land. We shall thus be able to see the links of our historic connexion with the Church of the first days, and gain a fuller, grander view of what is meant by "the Catholic Church."

From the records in the Acts of the Apostles we notice how quickly and widely the message of the Gospel spread, until within the thirty years included in that Book, Christianity had penetrated into Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, if not to other places not mentioned in the Acts. Nor is it to be regarded merely as a rhetorical phrase that St. Paul could say to the Colossians that the Gospel had come to them "as it is in all the world" (Col. i. 6). In those days every Christian was an evangelist, and to spread the Good News was the natural and necessary outcome of the possession of spiritual life. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv. 20).

This earnest spirit of propagation continued in the second and third centuries, and from writers like Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny

we have clear testimonies to the remarkable spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire. The opposition to the Gospel and the persecutions of Christians in these centuries show plainly how the message of redemption was spread and how it was evoking the hostility of Satan. Wherever the Gospel was received societies of Christians were forthwith formed, and thus little companies of believers were to be found almost everywhere rejoicing in their newly discovered Saviour, and passing on by personal testimony the blessings they had received. In the second century we read of churches in Syria, Rome, Asia Minor, Greece, North Africa, and Gaul, and we possess the records of such noble followers of Christ as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna. So the Good Tidings were carried everywhere, and the Church of Christ became an increasing power in the world. Particular churches were associated with one another by frequent visits of Christians to and from different localities, and they increasingly realized their essential oneness in Christ and the need of a united and wholehearted witness to Him and His grace.

It is impossible in the space at our command to trace the general history of the Church any further, but it continued to spread east and west in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, and became an ever mightier power in the world in proportion as it continued steadfast and true to the great principles of its Founder and His Apostles. Everyone who is interested in the spread of Christianity will naturally make himself acquainted with the history of the Christian Church, and will delight to trace its progress through the centuries.

For our present task we must now limit ourselves to the Church as it applies to our own country and to the membership of the Church of England. When, or how, Christianity came first to Britain is entirely unknown. It has been thought that it was brought over by some Roman soldiers who, as we know, were continually coming to Britain in the later years of the first century. It is quite possible, and even probable, that some soldier may have heard the Gospel in the East, or in Rome, and then by reason of the military movements of the time was ordered to Britain. We have seen what keen evangelists those early Christians were, and it is more than likely that the Gospel thus came first to our shores. Communication between Rome and Britain was sufficiently easy to make it possible for Christianity to reach Britain by the end of the first century.

It is generally supposed, and with good reason, that Christianity was introduced into Britain from Gaul, where in the South, in the districts of Lyons and Vienne on the Rhone, there were flourishing

Christian churches as early as A.D. 177. As Southern Gaul was closely connected with the Church in Asia Minor, we can see how easily and simply Christianity could spread from Asia Minor to Britain. Of definite proof, however, we have none. We only know that early in the third century Tertullian, writing in North Africa, makes the boast to the opponents of Christianity that "territories in Britain, inaccessible to the Romans, have been won for Christ." This is not the only testimony to the existence of a British church from writers in the Mediterranean countries of the third and fourth centuries. There must have been good grounds for such a statement, and indeed we still have some indication of Tertullian's warrant for his boast. The first historical event, as to which there is little question, is the martyrdom in 304 of Alban, a Roman officer, at the place now known as St. Albans. In the year 314 a Council was held at Arles, in Gaul, at which three bishops from Britain were in attendance. Representatives from Britain were also found at the Council of Rimini or Ariminum in 359. References to the British Church are also found in the writings of Hilary in 358, and Athanasius in 363. Some authorities go so far as to consider it very probable, if not certain, that British bishops were at the Council of Nicaea in 325. The great authority of the late Bishop of Bristol (Dr. G. F. Browne) gives weight to the following statement—

"The records of the signatures at the Council of Nicaea in 325 are, as is well known, not in such a state as to enable us to say that British Bishops were present. But considering their presence at Arles, the first of the Councils, and the interest of Constantine and his intimate local knowledge of its circumstances; considering too, the very wide sweep of his invitations to the Council; it is practically certain that we were represented there. At the Council of Sardica, in 347, only the names of the bishops are given, not their sees. But fortunately the names of the bishops are grouped in provinces. The Province of the Gauls—that is Gaul and Britain—had 33 bishops present. I think any one who has studied the dates of the foundation of the French bishoprics will allow that to make up 33 bishops in 347, several British bishops must have been included."<sup>1</sup>

Early in the fifth century we have records of British Christianity in association with the churches of Gaul, and about the year 450 probably, the British missionary Patrick became the apostle of Ireland. Unfortunately in England the Anglo-Saxon invasions virtually destroyed the Christian Church, but it continued to flourish in all other parts of the British Isles. Early in the sixth century, David the Welsh missionary and saint lived and worked. Later on, towards the close of that century, we have records of the life and work of Columba, an Irish Christian who lived on the Island of Iona and evangelized the country of the Picts above the Grampians. In

<sup>1</sup> *The Church in these Islands before Augustine*, p. 73.



585 another Irish Celt, Columbanus, did missionary work among the Pagans of North-East Gaul. It is noteworthy that this Celtic missionary work was all previous to the coming of Augustine from Rome.

When Augustine came in 597 he consequently found already in most parts of Britain an organized Church, differing in certain points from the form of Christianity introduced by himself. Augustine was sent to Britain by Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome. The way in which Gregory was led to send this mission has often been told. He saw some English boys in the slave market at Rome, and was led by his interest in their bright, intelligent faces to determine on sending a mission to the country from which they had been brought. Augustine's labours were confined to the kingdom of Kent, and in the year 600, Ethelbert the king was baptized, being the first Anglo-Saxon king who received Christianity. Augustine thereupon tried to win over the British Church to allegiance to himself and to conformity with Roman Christianity, but he entirely failed in his attempt. From Kent, Christianity was received into Northumbria in 627, but failed at first to obtain a permanent footing. When it had become settled, it was in the Celtic form imparted by St. Aidan, who drew his inspiration from Iona, not Rome. Then gradually, either under Celtic or Roman influence, all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy received Christianity, though the great majority of Anglo-Saxon Christians followed the Celtic form of worship.

Later on, the influence of Roman Christianity became very powerful, chiefly through the exertions of Wilfrid, a young, able, and energetic Northumbrian, who had become enamoured of Roman ways and did his utmost to assimilate Anglo-Saxon Christianity to the Roman forms of worship and discipline. The kingdoms of the Heptarchy having been separately converted to Christianity, had each its own separate church, but under the influence of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury (669-690), they were gradually united into one Church, under the See of Canterbury; and it is a remarkable fact that there was one Church of England at least 150 years before there was one monarchy for the whole country. The process of assimilation to Rome was naturally hastened by all these and other events. Roman learning was introduced into the country, and Anglo-Saxon Christianity became entirely devoted to the great power and influence of the Roman See.

The coming of the Danes had a disastrous effect on the Anglo-Saxon Church, but King Alfred's victory was the means of restoring Christianity. The relation of English Christianity to Rome continued the same, and in particular the Church of this country acknowledged its dependence on Rome for the transmission of its

ministry. By the coming of the Norman Conqueror, and especially through Archbishop Lanfranc, the power of the Church was further extended and deepened, and although William and his successors took steps from time to time to prevent the encroachment of Rome upon the royal prerogatives, the Church in England was to all intents and purposes part of the Roman Communion. This unity and communion with Rome need not, in itself, have been an evil, but for the fact that by this time the Roman Church had departed from New Testament truth, purity, and simplicity, and had contracted some very serious errors and corruptions, both in doctrine and practice. Between the time of Augustine's coming and the time of the Norman Conquest great and far-reaching changes had come over the Church of Rome. The Pope in the eleventh century claimed to be supreme over all countries and churches, and over all things civil and ecclesiastical. These claims were sometimes resisted, but for the most part accepted, and the influence of the Roman See on the ecclesiastical life of England was almost paramount for several centuries. In spite of their useful work of reorganization, the Normans were instrumental in the wider spread of these errors and corruptions.

Into the various strifes which arose from time to time between monarchs and archbishops it is impossible to enter; suffice it to say, that in most cases the ecclesiastical power gained the victory, and the Archbishops of Canterbury wielded enormous influence. Spiritual life was generally at a very low ebb, and the dangerous errors introduced from Rome were gaining an ever firmer footing in the land.

Early in the thirteenth century several successful attempts were made to curb the Roman power by checking papal nominations to English sees and livings, and in the following century these signs of reviving national life received support from Wycliffe's movement against Rome, which was based mainly on doctrinal grounds. His followers, who were known as Lollards, were, however, relentlessly persecuted by the Archbishops of Canterbury, and Rome still maintained her sway in ecclesiastical affairs. These Middle Ages (1000-1500) were a period of gross darkness, the bulk of the people being ignorant concerning the spirituality and power of true Christianity.

Under King Henry VII, at the end of the fifteenth century, there was a revival of learning, but there was no serious attempt at reformation in religion. English Christianity had now become entirely identified with the errors of mediaeval Christianity under the Roman See. There was very little spiritual teaching for the people; superstitious doctrines and practices abounded; the clergy obtained great revenues by means of prayers and masses for the

dead ; the monasteries were corrupted ; and the state of the Church and country was deplorable in the extreme.

The revival of learning by means of the study of the classical languages and of science naturally elicited and fostered a spirit of inquiry. The Greek Testament, which may be said to have been like a newly discovered book, soon showed how far removed from primitive Christianity were most of the characteristic doctrines of mediaeval Roman Catholicism, and a study of history clearly revealed the baselessness of the claim of the Roman Church to universal authority and supremacy. It was discovered that early Christianity knew nothing of this claim, and that the Church of Rome was but one of several leading churches of the first three or four centuries. Moreover, the characteristic claims of Rome were found to be based on forgeries, and certain well-known documents purporting to give the Roman Church supreme power, were nothing more than spurious writings of the Dark and Middle Ages.

The revival of learning was greatly strengthened and fostered by the invention of printing. The Bible was in Latin, which many of the English clergy themselves could not read, while the common people were, of course, quite ignorant of it. With printing came the opportunity for a version of the Bible in English. Wycliffe had (in 1380) translated the Bible into English from Latin, but apart from the ruthless persecution of those who were discovered to possess a copy, the expense of copying it by hand made it entirely prohibitive to most people. Printing soon altered this, and in 1526 William Tindale who had made a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek, had it printed and circulated as widely as was possible under the circumstances of the time and the opposition of the Church authorities. It is recorded of Tindale that when a Roman priest said, "It were better to be without God's law than without the Pope's," he replied, "If God spare my life, I will take care that a plough-boy shall know more of the Scriptures than you do." How well he kept his word we now know, and Tindale's New Testament carried with it the promise and potency of a genuine, spiritual reformation.

### CHAPTER III

#### *THE CHURCH IN HISTORY—(2)*

IN 1529 King Henry VIII broke with the Pope of Rome on personal and political grounds, and conceived the idea of making the Church

as national and English as it had become Roman from the days of Wilfrid onwards.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the Church itself was doing something in the right direction. In 1536 books and doctrinal articles were issued for the instruction of the people, and, later on, the Bible and portions of the services were published in English. It was impossible for the authorities to ignore what was going on in Germany and elsewhere on the Continent and among the laity in England in the direction of reform, and though no doctrinal break with the essential position of Rome was possible during the reign of Henry VIII, there were forces at work which were all tending to produce effects which would bring about great changes.

Thus we may see two movements proceeding side by side, the spiritual and the political, to a large extent separated, and during the life of Henry actually opposed, yet each doing its own part towards freeing our country from Roman errors and chains. Henry's political severance from Rome thus prepared the way for the further extension of what has been called the "People's Reformation," that movement which had existed in spite of persecution from the days of Wycliffe and the Lollards, and had been so greatly fostered and furthered by Tindale's New Testament.

Under Edward VI these two movements, the constitutional and the spiritual, became united. The young king and his advisers were determined to throw off the Roman yoke, which had been pressing on the national and civil life for centuries, while the progress of spiritual religion was spreading among the people on every hand. Henry VIII had endeavoured to check diversity of religious opinions by severity, but the new doctrines were now actually encouraged by the authorities, and the result was that Reformation principles grew, and the new views carried all before them in the larger towns.<sup>2</sup> The steady and wide circulation of the Bible in English had equipped and emboldened the Reformation party, and the consequence was that the old party was no match for the new.

The Reformation movement expressed itself at length in the first Reformed Prayer Book of 1549, under the influence and guidance of Archbishop Cranmer. In 1552 a revised edition of the Reformed Prayer Book was issued, and this is substantially the book we use to-day. Roman doctrines and practices were entirely absent from the new book, and all allegiance to Rome, whether in doctrine or discipline, was finally abjured. The new doctrinal position was stated in the forty-two Articles of 1553, the basis of our present Thirty-nine.

It is necessary to realize clearly what were the method and results

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii, p. 500 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 500 f.



of this great upheaval. The changes were effected without any breach in the continuity of the organization of the Church. The political circumstances of the time, and the association of the Archbishop of Canterbury with Henry, Edward, and the civil authorities, made it possible for the changes to be brought about without any break with the past so far as Church government, buildings, and organization were concerned. But while there was this continuity of organization there were many and serious changes in doctrine and practice. The New Testament teaching about the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord and our personal relation to it, about the Sacraments, about the ministry, about the future life, were once more brought clearly forward, and the new formularies of doctrine and worship were purged of everything alien to the teaching of Holy Scripture. The Church lost nothing of essential Christianity; indeed, it had become so encrusted with error, that essential Christianity was itself practically lost so far as spiritual life and power were concerned. The fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith were once more seen in their purity and glory, and again Christianity had an opportunity to spread and grow in our land.

The circumstances of the English Reformation were thus among the most remarkable in history. There was no split or severance of organization, no trace of two Churches existing side by side each claiming to be the true Church, but simply a change from within; in a word it was a reformation, not a *re*-formation; a purification of the doctrine, discipline, life, and organization whereby the Church became identified with primitive Christianity, free from foreign and erroneous accretions. It was as a house which had become filled with dust and dirt, and whose furniture and general appearance had become soiled, and in a measure even spoiled by the accumulations of time. All was now purified and renovated, and much of the old, useless, and even dangerous furniture removed and replaced by new. The foundation of the house remained, the house itself as a structure remained, but the interior became changed, the air and light of heaven were allowed to enter, the place was cleansed and renewed, and even the inmates themselves underwent changes. So the Church of England at the Reformation had the same fundamental position of adherence to the great Catholic Articles of the Creed concerning the Godhead, and while the structure and organization remained, the inner life was almost entirely reformed. By purity of doctrine, by simplicity of worship, by holiness of life, by liberty of conscience, and by primitiveness of organization, by the entrance of the atmosphere of New Testament Christianity, the whole structure of the English Church underwent a definite and blessed reformation.

"The Reformation was quite the opposite of a revolt ; it was the *re-establishment* of the principles of primitive Christianity. It was a *regenerative* movement with respect to all that was destined to revive ; a *conservative* movement as regards all that will exist for ever. It was a new outpouring of that life which Christianity brought into the world." <sup>1</sup>

The triumph of the Reformation in the reign of Edward VI was, however, but short-lived, for the accession of Mary brought back Roman Catholicism, and with it a great swing of the pendulum. She soon repealed all acts of the former reigns which bore on constitutional and doctrinal matters in relation to Rome, and then proceeded to stamp out the Faith by means of persecution. Mary's name will ever be associated with those terrible martyrdoms which have been so deeply burned into our national life that the memory of them has affected the whole English history ever since. For six years this terrible state of affairs continued, and for a time it seemed as though the unreformed religion had again gained a permanent footing, but Mary's reign was followed by that of Elizabeth, and with the accession of the latter came the restoration of the Reformed Faith, on the basis of the Reformed Prayer Book of 1552.

The Reformation position now obtained a permanent settlement, and with only some very slight modifications and additions, the position of the Church of Elizabeth's day is the position of the Church of England at the present time. It can therefore be readily seen what striking features characterized the English Reformation. Never did such a revolution take place so easily and naturally. In spite of all the political intrigues, the plots and counter-plots of political and religious parties in the time of Edward and Elizabeth,<sup>2</sup> by which now one and now another policy obtained the upper hand, a great movement was going on among the people, for the populace had been taught by experience, and were ripe and ready for change, welcoming it as a return to the joyous simplicity, hearty confidence, and spiritual power of New Testament Christianity. Thus the leaders and the people were united in this great national movement which was the foundation of modern England, and the main explanation of all subsequent national liberty and progress. The Church, as thus purified at the Reformation, became at once Scriptural, Catholic, and Protestant ; Scriptural because based on Holy Scripture : Catholic as holding the foundation faith of early and undivided Christendom : Protestant as separated from, and opposed to, the errors and corruptions of Rome.

<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*.

<sup>2</sup> It should be borne in mind, as Bishop Creighton points out, that Elizabeth never executed any one on *religious* grounds, but only as traitors to the civil power.

"To my mind the English Reformation—and I am as certain of the fact as I can be of anything—is the greatest event in Church History since the days of the Apostles. It does bring back the Church of God to the primitive model. Here, then, we are in possession of the one message from God Himself, and we have it restored to us in its primitive character, and claim for ourselves that, little as we deserve it and great as our shortcomings are in the use of it, we have a gift for which we are accountable to God Himself and to all mankind. The fact of the Reformation immensely increases and deepens our obligation to teach that which we know of Christ our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Into the various chequered movements of the Church and Christianity in England during the time of the Stuart dynasty it is unnecessary to enter. It will suffice to say that the Prayer Book underwent slight revision in 1604 and 1662, without involving any fundamental or vital alteration, and without departing from the position laid down by Elizabeth and her advisers when they adopted the Reformed Prayer Book and Articles of 1552-3 as the basis of the restored religion. Our purpose in giving this brief outline of the history of the Church has been to show how that community and organization which we call the Church of England has come into being, and how thoroughly the doctrine and discipline, as embodied in the Prayer Book and Articles, conform to the New Testament idea of the Church. We are justified in claiming that the Church of England is a portion of that great Church of Christ which in its fullness and completeness is "the blessed company of all faithful people," and whose visible expression is defined in Article XIX when it says that—

"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the **which** the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

FROM the consideration of the meaning and history of the Church we naturally pass to the study of the Christian ministry, for it is specially by means of the ministry that the Church expresses and perpetuates its life and witness.

**I. The Fact of the Ministry.**—The New Testament is of course perfectly clear on this point; there is such a thing as a distinctive Ministry in the Christian Church. It is true that all Christians are God's servants, expected to work for Him, and in this sense "ministers"; but the New Testament also differentiates between

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii., p. 682.

Christians as to the precise forms and functions of their service, and in so doing teaches the fact of a special Christian ministry.

(a) The first point to consider is the *Source* of Ministry. Ministry is a Divine gift. We remember how the Ministry arose. Christ called men to be disciples (John i. 43), then some disciples to be ministers (Luke v. 10), then some of these to be Apostles (Luke vi. 13). The call of Christ is the source of ministry and qualification by Christ naturally follows. "He ordained twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth" (Mark iii. 14).

So it has ever been, and so it is now, all true ministry starts and must start with the Divine call and gift. In whatever way it is exercised real ministry comes first from the call of Christ and the equipment or qualification of the Holy Ghost.

(b) The next point to consider is the *Proof* of Ministry. This is seen in what is called a Church Commission. The Divine gift is followed by recognition and commission by the Church or whole body of Christians. In Acts vi the Seven were first qualified by the Holy Ghost, then recognized by the Church as qualified and suitable, and then ordained by the Apostles as the existing ministry of the Church. It is therefore the true place and duty of the Christian body to recognize and commission those whom God has anointed and endowed. This, of course, assumes that the Church as a whole is living close to God, and can recognize spiritual gifts. If this is not so, God may raise up special men apart from Church recognition to rebuke the Church's unfaithfulness. We have illustrations of this in Church History, both in Jewish times and Christian, when the Church as a whole failed to recognize the presence of spiritual gifts. But if the Church's spiritual life is right, ecclesiastical commission will naturally follow spiritual qualification.

We see, then, that the ministry is first a gift and then an office. If the office is put before the gift there is spiritual disaster, for the ministry will lack power. If the gift is not duly exercised in connexion with the office there is ecclesiastical disorder, for the ministry will lack recognition and commission. The gift exercised in the office combines the spiritual and ecclesiastical aspects of the ministry, and fulfils the normal will of God. Article XXIII gives us the full and clear statement of the Church of England on this latter point of the association of the ministry with the whole body of Christian people and the already existing ministry.

"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers, into the Lord's vineyard."



2. **The Form of the Ministry.**—How did this spiritual gift of ministry express itself?

(a) It was gradually developed as required. Christ appointed Apostles only (the seventy were for a temporary mission, Luke x), and for a time the Apostles were everything, and expressed in themselves all necessary ministry. But soon came the call for division of work, and we find differentiation of function by the appointment, first of the Seven (Acts vi), then of Evangelists (Acts viii), then of Elders or Presbyters (Acts xi. 30 ; xvi. 23). All this was done very gradually and according to need.

We may note, too, that the methods and forms were, so to speak, elastic and various, according to circumstances. The Divine gift was a fact, but the forms of it varied, as we can see from the lists of offices in 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv. 11, which differ distinctly from each other.

(b) Yet towards the close of the New Testament times there was a gradual tendency towards fixity of form as the miraculous gifts of the Spirit ceased or grew less and the regular work of the Church became increasingly emphasized. This fixity of form in the ministry was either Evangelistic or Pastoral, and the Pastoral ministry included (a) ministers or deacons, (b) elders or presbyters, and (c) something like an overseership in certain cases. It should be observed however that the terms "presbyter" and "bishop" stand for the same office in the New Testament. Perhaps they represent the Jewish and Gentile names for the same thing, or else different aspects of the same work (Acts xx. 17, 28 ; Phil. i. 1 ; 1 Tim. iii. 1). There is no distinction of office in the New Testament such as we have to-day in Bishop and Presbyter. Timothy and Titus were not what we should call Bishops, but were really Apostolic delegates sent by St. Paul on a temporary and special commission. Thus, when some thirty years after New Testament times, Episcopacy proper arose, it is seen to be a development from below, not a devolution from above, that is to say, it arose naturally out of the ordinary ministry of the presbyterate and did not descend from the Apostles, as though taking their place. The Apostles, as Apostles, had no successors. All that we can say is, that in the New Testament there are germs of a threefoldness of function and work, but no trace of any threefold distinction of order and office. It is very necessary to distinguish between what is essential in the ministry as seen in the New Testament, and what is thought advisable or has been found useful and valuable in Church History.

This is the view of the Church of England with regard to the precise forms of her own ministry. The Preface to the Ordinal speaks of the three Orders of the ministry as Offices which "were

evermore had in such reverend estimation," and are therefore to be "continued, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England." From the second century to the Reformation, Episcopacy in some form had been part of the Christian ministry, and in the singular providence of God it was possible for the Church of England in the sixteenth century to continue this as part of her heritage. At the same time, this did not prevent Archbishop Cranmer and the other Reformers, who were responsible for our present formularies, from having intimate fellowship with Christians of other Churches, who, through no fault of their own, had been unable to preserve the episcopal form of ministry.<sup>1</sup> While our Church rightly requires for her own ministers episcopal Ordination, the reference is inclusive not exclusive.

"It is interesting to notice how she treats the subject entirely from a practical point of view, pronouncing on it, not as an abstract theological question, but only as it concerns herself. She is not called upon to judge others."<sup>2</sup> Thus we have in the Church of England to-day the virtual equivalent of what is found in the closing years of the first century. A pastoral ministry of (1) ministers or deacons, (2) elders or presbyters, and (3) the overseership of the Episcopate.

These three forms of the pastoral ministry are remarkably like those of the ministry of the Jewish synagogue, where there was a minister or deacon, an elder or presbyter, and the ruler or president of the elders. There seems little doubt that the form of our ministry is largely fashioned on that of the Jewish synagogue, while there is no doubt at all that it was *not* framed on the pattern of the Temple priesthood. There is no real analogy or connexion between the Christian ministry and the Levitical priesthood, for the simple reason that their functions and powers were for entirely different purposes. We shall see this as we consider our next point.

**3. The Purpose of the Ministry.**—"He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for their work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12, R.V. and Greek).

(a) We see from the New Testament that the work of the ministry is twofold, Evangelization (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), and Edification (Eph. iv. 11-16). The ministry has for its object the work of extending the Church and strengthening the Church; "lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes." A study of the Acts of

<sup>1</sup> See Palmer, *A Treatise on the Church of Christ*, vol. i, pp. 292 ff. Also Norman Sykes, *The Church of England and Non-Episcopal Churches in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 744.

the Apostles shows this very plainly. From place to place the Apostles and Evangelists went preaching the Gospel, and when that was done they proceeded to form and build up the believers into a Christian Church, which in turn became the centre of evangelistic work and spiritual progress (Acts xiv. 3, 23).

(b) This twofold work does not involve any idea of priestly Mediation. One of the foundation principles of Christianity is the priesthood of all believers, which means unrestricted access to God at all times, and on the basis of this universal priesthood we find a variety of special spiritual gifts (1 Cor. xii. 8-11) for the purpose of ministry. But these special gifts do not so affect the foundation as to constitute any special class of believers priests or a priesthood in any special or unique sense. Christianity is properly described in this connexion as a religion which *is* a priesthood, and not one which *has* a priesthood. The singular number "priest" is never used of any believer in the New Testament; only of our Lord. The Jewish word for sacrificing priest (*ιερεὺς*) is never used to denote the Christian minister as distinct from a layman. This is a simple fact. It is also a significant fact when we remember that the Apostles were all Jews and therefore steeped in sacrificial ideas and associations. Yet they never describe the Christian ministry as a sacrificial priesthood. (Rom. xv. 16 is clearly symbolical and spiritual as the terms and context show). The ministry is a medium, not a mediation, and there is a world of difference between these ideas, the difference between truth and error.

In this connexion, the use of the term "priest" in the Prayer Book is to be carefully noted. Our English word "priest" has to do duty for two distinct and very different ideas; (1) as the equivalent of the Hebrew sacrificing priest (Heb. Cohen); (2) as the equivalent of the Greek word "presbyter" or "elder." The latter word is shortened thus, presbyter, prester, priest, (French, *prêtre*). The former idea is, as we have seen, quite foreign to the conception of the ministry of the New Testament, and the word "priest" is therefore used in the Prayer Book as the equivalent of the latter idea of "presbyter." Wherever it is found it is the exact representative of the "presbyter" or "elder" of the New Testament. It is often found in the Prayer Book used interchangeably with the term "minister"; for example, in the Morning Service the Absolution is ordered to be said "by the Priest alone, standing," and yet at the close it says, "Then the Minister shall kneel down." So in the Rubrics after the Creed in Morning and Evening Prayer, and in like manner in the Rubrics after the Holy Communion Office before and after the Consecration Prayer. This, too, is the meaning of the Ordinal where the Bishop says, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the

office and work of a priest in the Church of God." Part of the office of a presbyter is to fulfil our Lord's great and world-wide commission, to declare the terms of forgiveness of sins (John xx. 22, 23). This is the work of the Christian minister. A priest, strictly speaking, is one who represents man to God (Heb. v. 1), and the only Priest Who is able to do this for us is the Lord Jesus Christ. A prophet, on the other hand, is one who represents God to man, and comes forth from God's presence with His message for the world. Consequently, our Lord's commission was for those who may be rightly called prophets, not priests in the Old Testament sense, but presbyters in the New Testament sense, and this view our Ordination Service closely and clearly follows.

(c) The work of the ministry is not that of Church Government. This too, should be noted carefully. Even St. Paul, the inspired Apostle, says, "Not that we have dominion over your faith but are helpers of your joy" (2 Cor. i. 24). The government of the Church is not vested solely either in the ministry or in the laity, but is vested in both minister and people, and this was the view emphasized at the Reformation and provided for at that time in Parliament and Convocation as representing laity and clergy respectively. This representative government may be seen now in the Churches of Ireland, Canada, and the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. Because of changes since the sixteenth century, proper church government was virtually in abeyance for a long period in England; but under the Enabling Act (1919) the position has been partly restored with the setting up of Church Assembly. The laity have a Scriptural right to a voice in the counsels of the Church and in the selection of their pastors. They have no share in the transmission by Ordination of the ministerial commission, but they should have a voice in the settlement of the place where the commission is to be exercised. In the matter of the Seven (Acts vi) the people selected, and the Apostles ordained. Church discipline, too, is the work and prerogative of the whole body (1 Cor. v. 4, 5) and not of the ministry only, and whenever the discipline is exercised by the ministry it is as the representative of the whole Church.

**4. The Perpetuation of the Ministry.**—It is necessary and important to inquire how is this New Testament ministry to be continued. How may we guarantee to-day a ministry which shall represent the true idea of ministry according to the New Testament? There are three steps. The ministry will be perpetuated in the following ways.

(a) By God continuing to bestow the gift. This is ever at the root of the matter. The Holy Ghost must fit and qualify men for the ministry. In the Ember Collects and our Ordination Service



we recognize this. "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost?" "Man-made ministers" are not the ministers of the New Testament, or of the Prayer Book rightly used.

(b) By the Church continuing to recognize the gift. If the Church is living in the Spirit she will be quick to see the presence of the Holy Ghost in those who are led of God to take up the work of the ministry. This means spiritual life and spiritual perception, and readiness to understand the will of God.

(c) By the existing ministry continuing to commission by Ordination through prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus the three steps are: God giving, the Church recognizing, and the existing ministry ordaining, and we find them all provided for in our Ordination Services. The call of God is implied and stated in the question already mentioned. The recognition by the Church is seen by the opportunity given for objection to be made to any candidate. The commission by the ministry is bestowed through the laying on of hands. These are the guarantee of the perpetual New Testament ministry.

In the light of the foregoing, we must therefore note that Derivation and Continuance of ministry are at once inward and outward in aspect, but *primarily inward*, and evil will assuredly accrue if we emphasize the outward aspect to the forgetfulness of the inward. A ministry perpetuated outwardly, by outward actions only, has no necessary connexion with spiritual gifts and moral qualifications. The Jewish priesthood was of this kind where priest followed priest simply because each was of the house of Aaron. The same thing is possible to-day if we concentrate attention almost entirely on the laying-on-of-hands, and the result will be serious confusion between qualification and commission, for there will be no guarantee of spiritual purity and ministerial power. Ordination gives authority, not power; God alone can bestow the latter. The inward aspect is therefore to be placed first and the outward second, and the latter is to be emphasized only as the sphere where the inward qualification expresses itself. The spiritual fitness of the man and the spiritual faithfulness of the Church must be pre-eminent, and the real test of a legitimate ministry is not a historical connexion with the times of the Apostles by laying on of hands, but agreement with and loyalty to Apostolic doctrine and life. Laying on of hands will ensure historical continuity but not spiritual efficacy or practical efficiency in the ministry. It must never be forgotten that the act of laying on of hands in Scripture means benediction and commission, not the transmission of authority from one to another.

"As to the significance of the laying-on of hands. It is, no doubt, a widespread idea that this denotes *transmission*—the transmission of a

property possessed of one person to another. But it cannot really mean this. It is a common accompaniment of 'blessing,' i.e. of the involving of blessing. It is God who blesses or bestows the gift; and it is in no way implied that the gift is previously possessed by him who invokes it. True that 'the less is blessed of the greater,' but that does not mean that the greater *imparts* a blessing. When we come to think of this, it seems clear enough; and the inference suggested is one for which we may be thankful. It may save us from some mechanical and unworthy ways of conceiving historic continuity, which is just as real without them."<sup>1</sup>

We have now seen what is the teaching of the New Testament and our Church on the important subject of the Christian ministry, its nature, purpose, forms, and continuance. A later chapter on the Ordinal will enable us to consider the subject further on its more practical side, and to see how the great principles set forth in Holy Scripture are applied by our Church.

## CHAPTER V

### WORSHIP

THE exact title of the Prayer Book is a reminder of its supreme purpose as a guide to, and an expression of, worship. *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the Use of the Church of England*. Worship is at the foundation of Christian religion whether regarded from the standpoint of the individual or of the community. What do we mean by worship? It is man's acknowledgment of God's "worth" as seen in the heavenly acknowledgment "Thou art worthy" (Rev. iv. 11). It is the homage of the soul to its Maker and Father, the devotion of heart, mind, conscience, and will to the Most High God. Christianity has been well defined as devotion to a Person, and this devotion is expressed by the term "worship." It is the homage of the mind to truth, of the heart to love, of the conscience to purity, of the will to obedience. It is the constant and full acknowledgment of our relationship to God, and our recognition of Him as the Possessor and Controller of our life.

Christianity rests on two great facts: one, that God can speak to man; the other, that man can speak to God. Revelation and Worship are the foundation of the spiritual life. God speaks to us in Christ by the Spirit. We respond in lowly and joyous worship.

Our relation to God may be summed up in the four words: Sonship, Worship, Stewardship, Fellowship; the first signifying our

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood*. Second Edition, p. 167.

relation to God as children ; the second our relation as creatures ; the third our relation as servants ; the fourth our relation as friends (John xv. 13-15). Yet into all four the element of worship necessarily enters, for our sonship implies dependence and reverence, our stewardship involves faithful obedience, and our fellowship is never properly realized apart from a consciousness of our high privilege in being admitted to such wondrous association with the Eternal God.

This worship is at once individual and corporate, private and public. We worship God alone and also in company with others, and our united worship may be offered at home in the family or at Church in the congregation.

We must now consider some of the conditions of true Christian common worship and see how these are fulfilled in the provisions of the Prayer Book.

**1. Worship must be characterized by Intelligence.**—No worship is possible if the worshipper has no real idea of the meaning of what he is saying and doing. Our worship must be the expression of our intellectual life and the homage of our reasoning powers. It was on this account that at the Reformation the Latin language was discontinued and our Prayer Book given to us in the English language. Latin was not understood by the people, and it was impossible and intolerable that the solemn services of worship should continue to be conducted in an unintelligible language. We are reminded of this in the Exhortation at Baptism to have the child instructed by means of the "vulgar tongue," the ordinary language of everyday life. The same emphasis on intelligent worship is seen in the fact that at every service of Morning and Evening Prayer, and at Holy Communion, and also in the Occasional Offices, there are Exhortations which are full of instruction as to the real meaning and force of the worship to be offered. "What mean ye by this service" is thus answered very distinctly by our Church. All this is in keeping with St. Paul's words when he urges the surrender of the soul to God, on the ground that it is "our *rational* service" (Rom. xii. 1, 2).

**2. Worship must be marked by Spirituality.**—By spiritual worship is meant that which befits the spiritual part of our nature, that part which can hold fellowship with God. "God is Spirit ; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit" (John iv. 24). True worship is the communion of spirit with Spirit, and in keeping with this, St. Paul describes Christians as those "who worship God in the spirit," or "by the Spirit of God" (Phil. iii. 3, A.V. and R.V.). In like manner the Apostle speaks of himself as "serving God in the spirit" (Rom i. 9). No service can rightly be called worship

unless it comes from the spirit of man to the Spirit of God. Outward acts alone cannot suffice, there must be communion of soul with Soul, and personal contact between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Bodily acts and attitudes of worship are the natural accompaniments and expressions of worship, but they cannot be regarded as complete in themselves, much less as substitutes for spiritual worship. Since this is so, we must exercise care lest our worship fails to touch the spiritual part of our nature. It is only too possible for worship to be occupied with the senses, and to come short of reaching the spirit or of proceeding from the spirit. Sensuous emotion may often be mistaken for spiritual emotion, and it is well to remember that music in worship is liable sometimes to be confused with the worship of music. The distinction between natural emotion and religious emotion does not seem to be warranted by facts. Emotion is emotion, however it may be stirred, and it is awakened in one and the same way. It also acts in the same way by moving the subject towards the object. Emotion, therefore, is not either religious or irreligious, for it is absolutely under the influence of the particular objects presented to it from time to time. The difference in our emotion will be just in proportion to the objects offered to it. How much therefore depends on the true object of religion being presented to the soul ! A religion of the senses, when the eye is impressed with forms and the ear with tones, may be awe-inspiring without necessarily leading to spiritual worship, and unless our sensible impressions are at once deepened into devotion of will and action, we shall certainly fail of worshipping in spirit. For this reason spiritual worship must be quite simple and free from everything that would distract the mind and heart and make an appeal to the senses alone. Of course "simple" does not mean "bare" or "slovenly"; it only means that everything associated with our times and places of worship should be held in absolute subjection to the one great purpose of the spirit of man meeting the Spirit of God. It is the universal experience of Christian people that the more the senses are attracted, fascinated, and occupied, the less room there is for the action of the soul. The teaching of Christian History points very clearly to the fact that simplicity of outward ceremonial has been usually accompanied by reality of the inward spirit of worship. Religion is much more likely to perish from the overgrowth of ritual than from the lack of it. For this reason the Lord has only appointed two Sacraments, which are at once simple and sufficient. We shall best realize what is meant by worship in spirit if we constantly remember that the sole purpose of worship is to meet with, and to render homage to God. Everything else must be subservient in the literal sense of subserving that



great object. The worshippers need the presence of the Spirit of God in the heart on coming together for worship, and this is what is meant by St. Paul if we read the Revised Version of Phil. iii. 3.

3. **Worship must be based on Truth.**—"They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). Our worship must be true, whether we consider the Object of worship or the attitude of worship. The worship of God presupposes a prior revelation of the character of the Being to be worshipped, and worship on our part is a response to this Divine revelation. The revelation consequently conditions and safeguards the worship, indicating the Nature of the Object of worship, and instructing the worshipper how to approach the Deity. Man is not left to himself to conceive of the Godhead for himself or to worship according to his own idea. "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We can see the need and importance of truth in worship when we consider the various forms of superstition known to the world. Superstition is simply worship severed from truth. Worship must be based on religion, and religion must be based on a true idea of God. False worship will necessarily carry with it a false conception of God. True worship will therefore be based on, and inspired by, Holy Scripture, the Word of God. It is only there that we learn Who and What God is, and how we may worthily approach Him. No worship can possibly be true which is not impregnated and informed by the Word of God. It is for this reason that the Prayer Book, as a guide to worship, is so full of Holy Scripture. At every point and part of the Services Scripture is to be found. The Prayer Book is simply saturated with the Word of God. We have it in Lessons, Psalms, and Canticles; in Daily Prayer, in the Epistle and Gospel, in Holy Communion; and in Exhortations, Lessons and Psalms in the Occasional Offices, while the Collects and other prayers are full of Scriptural phrases and allusions. Thus our worship is kept true and maintained on the right level. The authority, inspiration, and instruction of holy Scripture are ever with us, prompting, testing, and safeguarding our holiest hours, and we can say with the Master, "We know what we worship" (John iv. 22), and with St. Paul, "So worship I the God of my fathers; believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts xxiv. 14).

4. **Worship must be marked by Reverence.**—Reverence is the feeling of deep respect and awe which should characterize the attitude of man to God. "Holy and reverend is His Name" (Ps. cxi. 9). It springs from the realization of our nothingness in comparison with His Majesty, of our sinfulness in contrast with His perfect Wisdom. "God is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep

silence before Him " (Hab. ii. 20). This is the "fear of God" of which the Bible speaks so much; not the cringing, slavish dread of the criminal in the presence of law, but the reverential respect and awe of true children for their Father. The freeness and fullness of Divine love in Christ and the perfect access which enables us to stand before God in no way sets aside, or even modifies, this spirit of reverence. Although we have access, it is into *the Holiest*, and He Who is our Father and Redeemer is also our God. Nowhere more clearly than in St. Paul, the great Apostle of free grace, do we find the emphasis of reverence in our approach to God. It is the spirit which bows in adoration and awe before the throne of Divine glory. It is almost unnecessary to call attention to this element in the Prayer Book; in our Confessions day by day, in the Adoration expressed in our Collects, in the Songs of Praise in Holy Communion we can see the marked emphasis placed on the great truth that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him" (Ps. lxxxix. 7).

**5. Worship must be permeated by Love.**—This is the complementary truth to the one just considered. Fear of the slavish sort "brings torment," but "perfect love casteth out fear" of that kind, while it yet maintains the true fear and awe of reverence. As there is fear in love so there is love in fear, and the true worshipper will find no incompatibility between the deepest reverence and the truest love for God. It is this freedom of love in our approach to God which is especially brought before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb. iv. 16). "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22). It is the confidence born of the grace of God which brings salvation and prompts the penitent believer to come as a child to a Father and pour out the soul in grateful love and devotion. When the heart thus preserves the balance between holy fear and filial love God is indeed worshipped in spirit and in truth. The Prayer Book is an eminent illustration of this perfect proportion and balance of fear and love. We have already noticed the former, and we have only to remember the great power of justification through Faith in Christ as proclaimed at the Reformation, and as embodied in our Articles, to realize what our compilers knew and enjoyed of "boldness to enter into the Holiest in the blood of Jesus." And in Collects such as for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, and for St. Philip and St. James' Day, and the General Thanksgiving, we have further proofs of the strict adherence of the Prayer Book to this essential point of New Testament worship.

**6. Worship must be associated with Fellowship.**—We have

already seen that our Prayer Book is a Book of *Common Prayer*, and while all the foregoing elements of worship are necessarily for the individual worshipper, whether in public or in private, we must never forget the corporate acts of our Church worship. We can see the value of this social and corporate act of Christianity from the earliest moment of the existence of the Christian Church. From the instant that the penitent believers were received by Baptism, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and of prayers" (Acts ii. 42). Their new life involved immediate fellowship, and this fellowship was mainly expressed in worship. Social worship is thus not merely an aggregation of individual acts of private worshippers; it is the common act of a congregation expressing its united and corporate relation to God. It is a realization of Christian unity and a remarkable testimony of that unity to others. All consideration of the New Testament references to public worship will show that there was a bond of union, an opportunity afforded to the individual Christian of realizing his fellowship with God's people and thereby of becoming stronger in the Lord. At the same time, it was a witness to the non-Christian world around of the reality, power, and joy of the Christian faith of the worshippers.

"The great benefit of public worship now, as in Apostolic times, is the realization of Christian brotherhood . . . the feeling clearly brought home to us of our common destiny, of our common duties to God and man. . . . Men might surely be ready to confess their recognition of one another as children of a common Father, as bound upon a common quest, as willing to help one another, and to learn from one another, as having common wants, common aims, common aspirations. Surely the least imaginative heart ought to be impressed by the simple grandeur of the symbol embodied in the assembling of themselves together in the presence of God."<sup>1</sup>

It is one of the most striking features of the Prayer Book that it insists upon the presence of others for the purpose of true worship. For Daily Prayer the bell is to be rung and the people gathered. It is not for an instant contemplated that the minister will be alone. This is at the root of the well-known requirement of three communicants in order to have a proper celebration, a rule applying even when the Holy Communion is ministered to the sick. We notice the same idea in the requirement about Baptism being administered when a congregation is present, and we see it also in the provisions made for so many events in life which are connected with other people. There are other Rubrics which point in the same direction. Corporate worship is the great principle of the Prayer Book in the spirit of the hymn—

O Lord, how joyful 'tis to see  
The brethren join in love to Thee !

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<sup>1</sup> *Sermons by Bishop Creighton.*

To sum up : Worship may be said to combine three aspects. It is an expression of our true relation to God ; a means of spiritual growth ; and a testimony to those around. If these three ideas are combined we shall not fail to be reckoned among those true worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship Him.

We have thus looked at the subject of worship generally and considered its exemplification in the Prayer Book. We have now to descend to particulars and to consider the various portions of the Prayer Book Services in detail, with a view to our increasingly intelligent and profitable use of it as a guide to true worship.

## CHAPTER VI

### *DAILY PRAYER*

THE opening portions of the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer give the key to the whole Service, and those who come late to Church must necessarily fail to appreciate to the full the special order and spiritual completeness of the Service. It is at the outset that the keynotes of the worship are struck and the worshippers prepared for what is to come. The opening sentences are taken from Scripture and are used as the "Text" of the Exhortation immediately to follow. They are solemn and definite reminders from God of the real needs of man and the true attitude of God to men. Then follows the "Sermon" (the Exhortation itself) based on the "Text," and in it we have the fivefold reason for coming to the House of God and five of the elements of all true worship. Again we see the strong emphasis placed on intelligent worship by instruction at the opening of the Services. This, together with the Public Confession and Absolution at the beginning of Daily Prayer, is a characteristic of the Church of England since the Reformation. The unreformed Church had nothing of the kind ; a fact which tells its own story. Moreover, and this is why we insist upon the importance of the opening part of the Services, the Exhortation clearly foreshadows the structure of the Offices for Daily Prayer. The whole of the Service is framed on the model here laid down, and no one can enter into the purpose of the Church in providing this who does not take part in it all through from beginning to end. Why, then, do we unite in common worship, and how does the Prayer Book meet the requirements of those of us who thus unite ?

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|---|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. "To acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness." | Repentance.   | General Confession and Absolution. |
| 2. "To render thanks."  | Thanksgiving. | The Canticles.                     |



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|--|----------|---|
| 3. "To set forth His most worthy<br>praise."                   | Praise.  | Psalms.                                 |
| 4. "To hear His most Holy Word."                               | Hearing. | Lessons.                                |
| 5. "To ask those things which are<br>requisite and necessary." | Prayer.  | Collects and the<br>concluding Prayers. |

1. **Confession.**—"To acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness." The General Confession is the first note of the chord of worship, and befits those who are sinners coming into the presence of the perfectly holy God. Sin has ever proved the barrier between God and man, and it is essential that every season of worship should be preceded, and prepared for, by Confession and Forgiveness of Sins. Into the details of the Confession it is impossible to enter, but we may notice its—

(a) Deep sense of sin in thought and feeling as well as in word and deed.

(b) Full consciousness of God's holiness.

(c) Humble dependence on God's mercy.

(d) Wholehearted determination to prove repentance by newness of life.

The Absolution naturally follows, conveying the assurance of God's forgiving mercy, pardon, and grace. The minister, or presbyter, acting on God's behalf, declares the Absolution or Remission of Sins to all who fulfil the conditions of hearty repentance and true faith. The Absolution is pronounced by "the priest alone," that is, without the people, as in the General Confession. A long established custom has limited the Absolution to the priest or presbyter rather than the deacon, though it is useful to remember that it is not essential for Absolution that the minister should be a presbyter.<sup>1</sup> The terms of the Absolution show that God has given power and commandment to His "*ministers*," a general term including all orders of the Christian ministry. In this act of declaring God's Absolution the minister is fulfilling the terms of his Ordination according to St. John xx. 23, which is a part of our Lord's commission to declare the Gospel and bring men to see the terms on which God forgives sins. As the Rubric teaches, Absolution is equivalent to Remission of Sins, and it is the part of the minister to convey, not the pardon itself (for God does that), but the assurance of pardon already granted by God to all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel. This is the Church's ordinary provision for those who come to worship, an opportunity of realizing God's will concerning sin, an opportunity for confession, and then an assurance of God's pardoning love and grace whereby it becomes possible to enter into the Holiest and worship in spirit and in truth.

<sup>1</sup> Drury, *Confession and Absolution*, p. 176.

The Lord's Prayer appropriately and beautifully follows. The sin having been confessed, and God's mercy accepted in Christ, the soul is enabled to say, "Our Father," and to proceed to the worship for which the congregation have come together. The first word of the Prayer is a fit introduction, "Hallowed be Thy Name." The child of God is a worshipper and the worshipper is a child, and on these terms of relationship all else is carried on. In this Prayer we have some of the elements of true worship, as we pray in succession for a filial spirit, a reverent spirit, a missionary spirit, an obedient spirit, a forgiving spirit, a cautious spirit, and a spirit of adoring praise.

2. **Thanksgiving.**—"To render thanks for the great benefits which we have received at His hands."

3. **Praise.**—"To set forth His most worthy praise."

Thanksgiving is the acknowledgment of what God gives to us. Praise is the acknowledgment of what God is in Himself. These two elements of worship are necessarily blended in the use of Canticles and Psalms. Psalm xcv is a fitting opening to the Thanksgiving and Praise with its twofold call, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord"; "O come, let us worship, and fall down." Then follow the Psalms for the day, arranged in portions so as to cover the Book of Psalms each month. It is one of the most remarkable facts of spiritual experience that these Psalms, composed thousands of years ago, under such very different circumstances from ours, and with so much less spiritual light and experience than we enjoy, should nevertheless be appropriate for us to-day. The explanation is that the spiritual attitude of the believing soul is essentially the same in all ages. The Psalms represent the response of man to God's revelation of Himself, and in the outbreathing of the heart of the Psalmist to God we find our own needs, feelings, and aspirations expressed. There is no part of the Old Testament Scripture so frequently and so fully used as the Psalms. At the same time, we are reminded, by the use of the Gloria after each Psalm or section, of the need of adding the full Christian idea to the Old Testament teaching, and of reading them in the light of the New Testament revelation.

The Canticles are taken from four different sources, thus showing the variety of our themes of Praise and Thanksgiving.

(a) The Psalms. The Jubilate Deo. Psalm c. The Cantate Domino. Psalm xcvi. These are characteristic songs of Praise from the Old Covenant.

(b) The New Testament. Benedictus. Magnificat. Nunc Dimittis. The use of these earliest Songs of the New Covenant is interesting as showing the links of connexion between the Old

Testament on the one hand and the complete revelation of the Day of Pentecost on the other.

(c) The Old Testament Apocrypha. The Benedicite. This comes from one of the Books which form the historical links of connexion between the close of the Old Testament dispensation, and the opening of the New. The Benedicite is intended to be an alternative to the Te Deum, but it is not used as such with any regularity. The rich, full spiritual teaching of the Te Deum makes it so pre-eminently suited for a service of Praise that it is not difficult to understand the preference which custom has shown for it. In the first Prayer Book of 1549 the Benedicite was ordered for use during Lent though there is no special appropriateness in it for that season. There is no rule to that effect in our present Prayer Book. The Canticle is specially appropriate for Septuagesima Sunday when the first Lesson is taken from the Story of Creation (Gen. i). It is also obviously suited for thanksgiving at the time of harvest.

(d) The early Christian Church. The glorious hymn known as the Te Deum comes to us, in part at least, from the sixth century. Its origin is not known with certainty, though it can be traced to the time of Ambrose and Augustine of Hippo. It consists of three parts in its present form. (1) The Hymn of Praise to the Holy Trinity (verses 1-13). (2) A confession of faith in, and prayer to, God the Son (verses 14-21). (3) A number of separate verses, mainly taken from the Psalms (verses 22-9).

There seems little doubt <sup>1</sup> that the above is the most natural division, and it is much to be desired that this use should become general, and that our musical renderings should be arranged in accordance therewith. The following renderings may be useful for comparison and study—

Verse 1. "We praise Thee as God" (Te Deum laudamus).

Verse 16. "Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a Virgin" (Version of American Prayer Book).

Verse 21. "Make them to be rewarded with Thy saints" (*munerari*, instead of *numerari*, seems to be the better reading).

Verse 29. "I shall never be confounded" (*non confundar*), cf. Isa. xlv. 17; l. 7.

By reason of its antiquity, its universality of use, and above all, its fullness and depth of Christian truth and experience, no Christian hymn of Praise can compare with the Te Deum.

4. **Hearing.**—"To hear His most Holy Word." It is sometimes thought that hearing the Word of God cannot be regarded as part of worship since worship strictly implies giving, while hearing implies

<sup>1</sup> See pamphlet on the subject, by the late Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Wordsworth).

receiving. This may be literally true as a general distinction, but in the present connexion it does not take into account all the facts of the case. At any rate, to "hear" is regarded by our Church as an essential part of the object for which we come together. Moreover, our worship needs constant guidance and direction from God in order to be true, real, spiritual, and acceptable. In other words, worship must ever be kept up to God's standard, and God's standard should ever be before us. This is only possible by means of the Word of God and its constant application to our life. True worship is necessarily based on Divine Revelation. In the heathen religions, whether ancient or modern, the main thought of worship consists in seeking God, and even Judaism, though necessarily far higher and purer, laid stress on ritual observances, in keeping of which would be great reward. Christianity however is not limited to the thoughts of seeking God or hoping for His favour—God has already drawn near in Christ, and Apostolic worship meant the immediate and constant appropriation of God's grace in Christ. It was not so much seeking God as possessing and enjoying Him, and one main result of this changed aspect of worship is the stress laid on the thought of *edification* as a main element of Christian worship. All through the Epistles this idea of mutual edification (*οἰκοδομή*) is a very prominent element of life and worship. To equip, confirm, and "edify" the believers with a view to further extension of Christianity was one of the chief aims of the Christian assembly. We see this very clearly in St. Paul's classic discussion of worship in 1 Cor. xiv. It is in close connexion, therefore, with this feature of New Testament worship that we find our Church emphasizing hearing God's "most Holy Word" in the public services, and we have here another of those indirect but convincing testimonies to the Scripturalness of our Church formularies and methods.

Further, we must never forget that great spiritual paradox of the Christian life which is suggested to us in Ps. cxvi. "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation." "What shall I give?" "I will receive." It is as though it were said, "How shall I worship?" "I will listen." As the Psalmist said, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (Ps. lxxxv. 8).

There is scarcely anything more striking and significant than the emphasis placed by our Church on the hearing of the Word of God as an integral part of our time of common worship. True devotion cannot thrive on ignorance, it must be fed by knowledge; consequently we have Bible reading, Bible teaching, and exhortation connected with almost every Service of the Prayer Book. In the Introduction to the Daily Prayer, in the Lessons, Creeds, and



Articles, in the Baptismal and Confirmation Services, in the Catechism, and in the Holy Communion Office we see very plainly the clear and definite position of instruction. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind" (Matt. xxii. 37) is ever to be part of our life of worship if we are to render what God expects from us, "reasonable service."

The careful consideration of the use of the Word of God in the Church of England reveals several points of great interest and value.

(a) Its regularity. Using the 1871 Lectionary,<sup>1</sup> we start in January, and the First Lessons are taken day by day from the most important parts of the Old Testament, from Genesis onwards, and in the course of the year a large part of the Old Testament is covered, together with a selection from the Books of the Apocrypha which "The Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth not apply them to establish any doctrine." For the Second Lessons the entire New Testament is covered twice in the year, except in the case of the Book of the Revelation. This steady reading from the Word of God is a striking testimony to the importance given by our Church to Holy Scripture. No Church in Christendom makes such full provision for bringing the Word of God regularly before its members.

(b) Its variety. The regularity ensures that variety and change which is as necessary for the proper nourishment of the mind and soul as change of diet is for the body. As the various Books come before us, now History, now practical Wisdom, now Prophecy, now Evangelical records, now Apostolic counsel and warning, we can see how varied is the provision and how effectively the Church brings before us the "manifold wisdom of God." The superior value of this variety over a selection of Lessons made by one man, and necessarily depending upon his personal idiosyncrasies and spiritual experience at any given time, must be obvious to all.

(c) Its appropriateness. In addition to the daily, steady reading of the Scripture, we have the special provision made for the Christian year. In the Advent and Christmas seasons Isaiah the Evangelical Prophet is brought before us. Then follows for Sundays a selection from the earlier books of the Old Testament, leading up to the solemn time of Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter. Again, we are taken on in the Sundays after Easter until we reach the culmination of Redemption and Revelation in Ascension, Whitsuntide, and Trinity Sunday. Then follows the latter half of the Christian year, with Scripture Lessons covering historical and prophetic books with their messages for daily living. No lessons from the

<sup>1</sup> A Revised Lectionary was issued in 1922 for alternative use, but following much the same plan.—G. W. B.

Apocrypha <sup>1</sup> are read on Sundays, and as the year is covered it can readily be noticed with what singular appropriateness the various Lessons are brought to our minds and hearts. Truly we have need of unbounded gratitude to God for this rich provision of instruction ; and every true worshipper will welcome this part of the service with its immense help to worship, and will "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the will of God as revealed in His Word in order that "by patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life."

The Creed naturally follows the reading of God's Word, for it is the expression of our Faith in that Word and our response to God's revelation. We listen to the message and then rise to bear testimony to its truth and to give expression to our experience of its blessing and power. In the words of the Apostles' Creed, that oldest and simplest Confession of our Faith, we bear witness to our solemn and personal, individual acceptance of the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and of all the redemptive facts associated with, and forming part of that revelation. On some thirteen particular and special days extending through the Christian Year, we use instead of the Apostles' Creed, the Confession of our Faith, commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius, which gives in an elaborate theological form the expansion of those facts expressed in the Apostles' Creed. The facts are implicit in Scripture, and in the Athanasian Creed they have been rendered explicit by reason of the pressure of heresy, and the need of instruction in, and careful adherence to, the full Christian Faith. Circumstances at the Reformation demanded, and it would appear fully justified, this exceptional use of the Athanasian Creed, for it is only so used (as a substitute for the Apostles' Creed) in the Church of England. Whether, therefore, we use the one or the other, the Confession of our faith has special and appropriate reference to the Word of God read in the Lesson, to which we thus give our "unfeigned assent and consent."

5. **Prayer.**—"To ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." After the Creed comes what is known as the "Lesser Litany"; then the Lord's Prayer and some Versicles and Responses, mainly from the Psalms, leading up to the Collects. The Lesser Litany is possibly one of the earliest forms of supplication addressed to each person of the Holy Trinity. The Lord's Prayer is repeated here without the element of praise associated with it in the earlier Service, thus giving the two forms of the Lord's Prayer which we find respectively in St. Matthew and

<sup>1</sup> In the Revised Lectionary (1922) passages from the Apocrypha are set as alternative Sunday readings.—G. W. B.

St. Luke. The Versicles are adaptations of Old Testament passages. One of them has a very significant alteration from its original context. When used in Ps. cxxxii, of the Jewish priesthood, it was necessarily "Let Thy *priests* be clothed with righteousness," but now that it is used in the Prayer Book of the Christian ministry it is rightly and necessarily altered to "Endue Thy *ministers* with righteousness." The Response to the last Versicle but one seems strange at first sight, but it means that peace can only come through God's power. The American Prayer Book has made this clear by substituting, "For it is Thou Lord only that makest us dwell in safety."

Then follow the Collects, those incomparable prayers which have been the treasure-house of devotion for centuries. It is impossible to enter fully into the consideration of their structure and characteristics, but we may at least note some of their features and see how appropriate they are to daily needs. There is scarcely a desire and want of the spiritual life that is not included. Their brevity too, is noteworthy, a characteristic which is especially helpful at the time of public worship. Coming as most of them do from the terse Latin, they have been translated into almost equally terse and telling English, and their suggestiveness thus makes them effective models of prayer. Their definiteness is also observable. They guide us to ask what we need without circumlocution or vagueness. Lastly, the peculiar agreement between the title by which God is invoked and the petitions that flow out of that title; the use of our Lord's mediation as the basis of prayer; and the often-used elements of praise and adoration with which they conclude are other noteworthy marks of these exquisite forms of devotion. It is not too much to say that the spiritual life which is fed by these Collects will never lack nutriment or guidance, but will have ample help and inspiration wherewith to ascend to God in heart and mind. They deal with those fundamental needs of the soul which are the same in all ages, and as public united prayer can only concern itself with common needs, the permanence and perpetual value of the Collects is obvious to all. They link us to the past in a way which constantly reminds us of the essential oneness of the people of God, and of the deep-seated unity of need and desire in all ages. Among these Collects will be found prayers from the earliest ages of the Church, together with those which were the work of the Reformers of the sixteenth century and the Divines of the seventeenth century. All combine and blend in a beautiful unity expressing the heart's devotion to God.

A few words are necessary at this point with reference to **the question of Daily Prayer** throughout the year. As worship is

the constant attitude of the life, and therefore should be the habit of the soul, the Church naturally provides the opportunity for public worship day by day. This provision is made even though it may not be possible for all Christians to avail themselves of it. The circumstances of life at the time when our Prayer Book was compiled enable us to understand the reasons why this provision was made. The ignorance of the people just emerging from Roman Catholicism and the fewness of devotional works in the English language made daily devotion and instruction particularly important. We can see this from the wording of the directions in the Prayer Book ; while all ministers are ordered to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, if not hindered by sickness or some other urgent cause, the order about Daily Prayer in the Church is clearly associated with the gathering of a congregation. The idea is not that of solitary prayers by the clergy, but the union of pastor and people in Daily Prayer. He is to "cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word and to pray with him."

It is manifest that as the conditions of life to-day are so vastly different from those of the sixteenth century it is impossible to observe this rule universally throughout all the parishes of the land. Not only is life infinitely more hurried and fuller of engagements, but Church life is entirely different in its multiplicity of meetings and opportunities for united gatherings for prayer and work. The latter fact should be ever borne in mind. The consequence is, that even where Daily Prayer is the rule there are very few Churches where both Morning and Evening Prayers are said, and even in these, moreover, the relaxation afforded by the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872 is utilized, whereby the shortened Form is used. The matter is clearly one which will depend entirely on local and congregational circumstances, and the "reasonable hindrance" must be left to the conscience and decision of the clergyman in charge. In a Rubric, the observance of which is essentially connected with such changes and even transformations of conditions as obtain to-day, compared with the sixteenth century, the clergy and people cannot fairly be called disloyal to the Prayer Book, if for any personal or local reasons Daily Prayer in Church is found impracticable. At the same time, it is impossible to ever-estimate the spiritual blessing to a parish where minister and people meet day by day for praise, and prayer, and intercession.



## CHAPTER VII

*HOLY COMMUNION*

THE place and use of the Lord's Supper in the Prayer Book is a key to the meaning and value set on it by the Church. First of all provision is made for the Administration of the Lord's Supper in the public Services Sunday by Sunday. Then it is associated with the Holy Days of the Christian Year, with the time of Sickness, and with the occasions of Marriage and Churching. It is evidently intended to express our corporate Christian life at ordinary seasons of worship as well as on those special and solemn occasions which form part of general Christian experience.

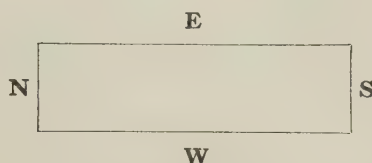
We have already considered the meaning of Holy Communion as a means of grace, and we have now to see how its due celebration is provided for in the Prayer Book and how we may enter upon it in the right spirit. Reserving for later consideration the use of Holy Communion on special occasions, we will now study the Service for ordinary Worship which, to give it its full title, is called "the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion."

**1. The Introductory Rubrics.**—The first Rubric, as to notice being given beforehand, is seldom obeyed now; circumstances and conditions have become so changed as to render its direction practically unnecessary.

The second and third Rubrics are concerned with discipline. The occasions which call for the exercise of these rules are rare and exceptional, but it is a great safeguard to have them in case of necessity as well as to show the mind of the Church on true spiritual participation. More especially, they call attention to the essential unity of Church life. The reference to the "Ordinary" is almost certainly to the Bishop of the Diocese.

The fourth Rubric orders the Communion Table to stand in the body of the Church or in the Chancel. Usage has practically annulled this Rubric. Originally it was intended to bring the Holy Table from its position at the extreme East end and place it in the body of the Church or Chancel, and for some time after the Reformation this seems to have been the general practice. The present arrangement of communicants going up to the Communion rails is said to have originated with Archbishop Laud. The Rubric, as it stands, together with the Rubric immediately preceding the long Exhortation to communicants, clearly implies that the communicants are not expected to go up to the rails. In certain Churches the practice obtains to this day of bringing the Elements round to

the communicants in their seats. The Holy Table when brought into the body of the Church or into the Chancel was placed thus—



and the minister was ordered to stand at the "North side" of the Table.

It is to be carefully noted that the only names for the Table given in the Prayer Book are "the Lord's Table," the "Holy Table," the "Table." In the Canons of 1604 we also have the "Communion Table."

2. **The structure of the whole Service** should be specially studied before entering upon particular details. It is divided into three parts—

(a) The Ante-Communion Service : to the end of the Prayer for the Church Militant.

(b) The Communion Service proper : to the close of the Administration.

(c) The Post-Communion Service : from the Lord's Prayer to the Consumption of the Elements.

3. **The Ante-Communion Service** is built up on the plan suggested by the last answer of the Catechism. "What is required of them that come to the Lord's Supper?" The answer gives three requirements—Repentance, Faith, Love—and these three form the framework of the Ante-Communion Service. After the preliminary preparation of heart by means of the Lord's Prayer and the exceedingly beautiful Collect for purity we have brought before us three requisites of true Communion.

4. **Repentance.**—The Commandments and Responses. In this call to Repentance the soul is brought face to face with the only true standard of living, God's most holy and perfect law, and when tested thereby our heart and conscience cannot but cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone, for mine eyes have seen" what God demands of me. In His light we see light on ourselves, and we stand guilty and condemned before Him, crying, "Lord, have mercy on us." With the consciousness of sin comes also the prayer for grace that the future may not be as the past. "Incline our hearts to keep this law." Thus the soul "repents truly of its former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life."

The prayer for the King is interposed here probably because of the Apostolic injunction, "I exhort, therefore, that, *first of all*, supplications . . . be made . . . for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2).

5. **Faith.**—The Epistle and Gospel followed by the Nicene Creed. "Have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death." The provision of a different Epistle and Gospel for each Sunday and Holy Day of the Christian Year brings again before us the fullness and authority of Scripture teaching in order to elicit our personal faith in Christ. The purpose of this book cannot include any comment on these passages, but careful study will reveal their appropriateness to the occasions and afford definite messages from God to which our trust can respond. Standing up at the Gospel is an ancient custom betokening special reverence for the Words of the Lord Jesus Himself as the centre and core of the Christian revelation.

The Confession of Faith is appropriately made in the words of that ancient symbol known as "The Nicene Creed," the fullest and richest Confession of the Christian Faith, and, as such, exactly suited to the gathering of the saints around the Holy Table of their Lord.

Connected with our Faith is the provision made for the Sermon, another indication of the mind of the Church as to intelligent worship and life. The Baptismal Office also shows this in its exhortation to sponsors to call upon the baptized child to "hear sermons." Preaching is quite clearly a means of grace, and a most important one, because it is understood to be based on the Word of God. The Homilies are also referred to as alternatives to the Sermon, and are mentioned again in Article XXXV. They consist of two volumes put forth at the time of the Reformation, when ignorance of Christian truth was so deep and widespread.<sup>1</sup> They are well worthy of study even now, and though they cannot be said to have the direct legal authority of the Prayer Book and other similar documents, their indirect authority, as representing the minds of the compilers and earliest revisers of the Prayer Book, is undoubtedly great, while much of their doctrinal and practical teaching is "godly and wholesome," and as necessary for "these times" as for those when they were first issued.

6. **Love.**—The Offertory and the Prayer for the Church Militant. The Offertory Sentences are, with two exceptions, from Holy Scripture. It is to be noted that when the Alms are received the clergyman is ordered to "humbly present and place" them on the Holy Table. This is due to the fact that the Alms are an offering to

<sup>1</sup> The Homilies were particularly valuable under Elizabeth, when there was a shortage of clergy, and many non-preaching ministers had been ordained.

God, a gift of our substance, a "sacrifice," according to Heb. xiii. 16. This order to "humbly present" before placing should always be carried out. The next Rubric is also noteworthy by contrast. There the Priest is to "place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient." There is no order to "humbly present" in this case because the placing of the Elements is not a gift or a sacrifice.

The words of the Rubric, "When there is a Communion" show that the Prayer Book, while providing for a weekly Administration, does not necessarily assume that there will be one in every Church.

The Prayer for the Church Militant follows, and the heading is to be observed. It is a prayer strictly limited to those to whom reference is made, that is, all Christians now on earth. The words "alms and oblations" refer respectively to gifts for the poor, and for the clergy. The word "oblations" does not refer to the alms, but to gifts included in the Offertory which do not happen to be for the poor. If there be no gifts for the poor the word "alms" should be omitted, and if none for the clergy the word "oblations" left out. The last sentence was added in 1662, and is a beautiful thanksgiving for those who have departed this life in the Lord, and the Prayer closes with a request for ourselves that we may follow their example and reach their consummation.

In case there is no Communion the Service ends at this point, together with one or two Collects and the Blessing (*see* Post-Communion Rubric 1). When the Communion Service is to follow, a pause at this point is convenient (though of course without the Blessing) for the purpose of giving non-communicants the opportunity of quietly leaving the Church, as no others than communicants are supposed to be present at the time of Administration.

**7. The two Exhortations** for use in giving notice of the Communion warrant our earnest attention.

(a) The first is for general use, though owing to the length and greater frequency of the Service it is now but rarely used. Its emphasis on the true spiritual attitude for the reception of the Holy Communion is very clear, as well as the renewed teaching on Repentance, Faith, and Love as the pre-requisites of worthy Communion. This preparation is to be made by the communicant himself. "Examine your lives and conversations." With true spiritual independence and healthy manly spirituality the Christian is taught to settle these things alone with God. At the same time, the contingency is provided for of some one being unable to find peace of mind and heart by this method of self-examination and preparation. Such a one is therefore urged to come to the minister and "open his grief."



(1) He is instructed to come to a minister who has the necessary spiritual experience suited to deal with trouble of soul and difficulty of conscience. "Let him come to me or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word." Spiritual unripeness and inexperience are obviously insufficient for such work. One who can, like a wise physician, administer God's Word is needed under these circumstances.

(2) He is to "open his grief," that is, to tell the particular trouble that prevents him from obtaining quietness of conscience and receiving Communion with a full trust in God's mercy.

(3) He will then receive "by the ministry of God's Holy Word" "the benefit of Absolution." The "wholesome medicine" of the Gospel being applied to this particular need will bring healing to heart and conscience. Its promises will encourage, its counsels instruct, and its precepts guide the soul.

(4) Then will follow "ghostly counsel and advice" from the experienced and spiritually minded minister of the Word of God.

Thus does our Church provide for that pastoral ministry of fellowship in things spiritual which is at the foundation of all true Church life.

(b) The second Exhortation has special reference to those who are negligent in coming to the Holy Communion. Its tone is therefore more solemn and severe, and its wording is striking and significant. The sin of non-attendance is shown, both from the standpoint of God and from that of the brethren. "Consider with yourselves how great injury ye do unto God . . . when ye wilfully abstain from the Lord's Table and separate from your brethren, who come to feed on . . . that most heavenly food."

8. **The Communion Service proper** commences here with the long Exhortation. The communicants are now supposed to be "conveniently placed for the receiving of the Holy Sacrament." Again the length of the whole Service has brought it to pass that this most beautiful Exhortation is but very rarely used. It is to be hoped, however, that communicants will not fail to use it in their private preparation before going to the Lord's Supper. Like the other Exhortations, it lays stress on due spiritual preparation and the consequent spiritual blessings that accrue. Then it calls solemn attention to the danger of receiving unworthily. It exhorts once more to Repentance, Faith, and Love, and last of all it calls for Thanksgiving to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for our redemption, at the same time reminding us of the purpose of the Holy Communion as a constant remembrance of the Death of our Lord and the innumerable benefits of His precious Blood.

9. **The short Exhortation**, which is said on all occasions of

Communion, is yet another call of Repentance, Faith, and Love. Thus carefully and repeatedly at each point the Church guards against unworthy reception, throwing the responsibility on the communicant and stating plainly the necessary conditions.

10. **The Confession and Absolution** naturally follow, and are couched in solemn language befitting the occasion. When they are compared with the Confession and Absolution used in Daily Prayer the difference is obvious, and we can appreciate the force and appropriateness of these deeper and fuller expressions at the time of Holy Communion. The Absolution is in the form of a Prayer, which is the earliest of all forms of Absolution in the Services of the Church.

11. **The Comfortable Words**, drawn from the New Testament, beautifully follow. They encourage our Faith, and convey the assurance of God's mercy and grace. "Comfortable" in the old English meaning blends the three ideas of Strength (cf. *Fortress*); Courage (cf. *Fortitude*); and Consolation (cf. *Comfort*). We have the same complete and helpful idea in the Prayer Book version of the Psalms. "Thy Name, O Lord, because it is so comfortable" (Ps. liv. 6). So also the title of the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter" includes all these phases of meaning. The Comfortable Words are taken from the Version known as "The Bishops' Bible."

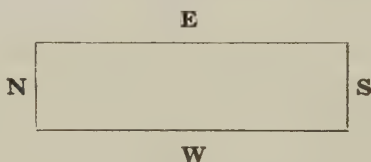
12. **Thanksgiving**.—The preparation is now over. Sin has been realized, confessed, and forgiven, and the soul is now occupied with thanksgiving to Him Who has wrought its redemption. *Sursum corda*, "Lift up your hearts," is now the only appropriate attitude.

The words commencing "Therefore with Angels" are to be repeated by all the communicants and not merely by the minister himself. This is evident from the Rubric after the Proper Prefaces which says, "After which Prefaces shall immediately be sung or said."

The Prefaces mark five great and pivotal facts of our redemption and God's revelation in Christ. Once again, therefore, we see the prominence given to doctrine and instruction at each stage of the Christian year.

13. **The Prayer of Humble Access** is a fitting introduction to the actual reception of the Holy Communion, and nothing could more beautifully express the attitude of the soul to God with a consciousness of its own nothingness and God's mercy, its own need and His fullness. The distinction drawn between our body cleansed by His Body, and our soul washed in His Blood is probably inspired primarily by the desire for rhetorical balance of phraseology. Although suggestive, it need not be regarded as an exact statement either of theology or of experience.

14. **The Prayer of Consecration.**—The Rubric preceding this Prayer needs notice. The Priest is instructed to stand “before the Table” for the purpose of placing the Bread and Wine within his reach, “that he may with the more readiness and decency break the Bread before the people, and take the cup into his hands.” The Bread and Wine have been in the centre of the Table up to this point, and now they are placed nearer the North end, and then the minister resumes his position, according to the Rubric at the beginning of the Service, which orders him to stand at the “North side of the Table.” The manual acts of breaking the Bread and laying the hands on the Cup are to be performed in the sight of the people, and the Rubric orders that the minister shall so arrange the Bread and Wine that he may be enabled to do this. With the assistant clergyman presumably present at the South side or end of the Table, there are only two other places at the Holy Table where this can be done, the North, or the East, facing the people. As the latter position does not seem to be contemplated (at any rate it is not mentioned in the Prayer Book), though it is the earliest and most primitive position, the only remaining place where the minister can break the Bread and take the Cup “before the people” is at the North side or end. At any other place it is simply impossible to obey the Rubric. With the present custom of retaining the Holy Table at the end of the Church, the North end is of course equivalent to the North side, as indeed it is stated in the Scottish Liturgy of 1637.



The Prayer of Consecration is very noteworthy.

- (a) It recites the fact and purpose of our Lord's Death.
- (b) It recites the institution and purpose of the Holy Communion.
- (c) It prays for the reception of grace in the due observance of our Lord's command. The phrase “these Thy creatures of *Bread and Wine*” should be noted.
- (d) It recites the words of institution as the manual acts are performed. The manual acts are clearly and succinctly stated. The Priest is “to take the Paten into his hands,” then he is to “break the Bread,” and then “to lay his hand upon all the Bread.” In like manner he is “to take the Cup into his hand” and “lay his hand upon every vessel in which there is any Wine to be consecrated.”

The meaning of Consecration is the setting apart of ordinary Bread and Wine for the extra-ordinary purpose of becoming and being used as the sacred symbols, seals, and pledges of the Body and Blood of our Lord. The Consecration, therefore, implies and involves a change of use and purpose, not of substance or material, for after consecration we pray that we "receiving these Thy creatures of Bread and Wine may be partakers" of the spiritual blessing.

The "Amen" at the close of this Prayer should be heartily responded to by all communicants. It signifies their part in the Consecration and is an appropriate carrying out of the Apostolic word, "The cup of blessing which *we* bless" (1 Cor. x. 16).

**15. The Reception.**—The minister receives first, no words being prescribed for his use. The words of Administration to the communicants consist of two parts. (1) A prayer. "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The reference to Calvary is to be noticed, "which was given for thee." The prayer is that we may receive the spiritual efficacy and blessing of our Lord's atoning Sacrifice. (2) The Exhortation. "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." We are to eat the Bread with the special meaning which our Lord attached to it, feeding on Him by faith. These two parts show the truth of what has already been said above (p. 114) as to the relation of the sign and the thing signified. The outward and the inward parts of the Sacrament are exactly parallel and concurrent, but are never to be identified. The Lord gives His own grace, the minister gives the Bread and Wine. When we draw near with faith the two are always coincident in time, but if there is no faith, the Elements are received and nothing more, for, "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively Faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing" (Article XXIX).

**16. The Rubrics after the Administration.**—Provision is made for the Consecration of additional Bread and Wine if more is needed, and when all have communicated the minister is to handle reverently the remainder of the consecrated Elements, covering them with a fair linen cloth until the end of the Service.

**17. The Concluding Prayers.**

(a) The Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is fitting as a united expression of the congregation at the close of this Service. "We being many are one bread and one body in Christ," and thus rightly and appropriately we lift up our hearts to "Our Father." The



Lord's Prayer may also be a reminder that not only at the Holy Communion, but also at all times, we need daily bread, or "All things that be needful both for our souls and bodies."<sup>1</sup>

(b) The first Post-Communion Collect is an appropriate expression of our feelings on such an occasion. It combines the thoughts of thanksgiving, prayer, the surrender of ourselves, and praise to God. "This our sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise" refers to the whole service of the Holy Communion from first to last. Thus we have in our Service the three spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament: "ourselves, our souls and bodies" (Rom. xii. 1); "the sacrifice of praise" (Heb. xiii. 15); and our gifts (Heb. xiii. 16).

(c) The alternative Collect is equally beautiful as a reminder of the spiritual blessings of strength and unity accruing to the worthy recipients of the Lord's Supper. These "holy mysteries" mean these "holy symbols," and the "mystical Body of Thy Son" is the "spiritual body," that is, the Church, "the blessed company of all faithful people."

18. **The Gloria in Excelsis** now follows and is to be "said or sung." There is no Rubric as to the attitude of standing here, and this is very appropriate, for without a break or disturbance we pass from prayer to praise. Yet even here, so great is our need that we can only pray for mercy; our holiest worship is ever stained by sin. This penitential tone caused by putting the Gloria at the end of the Service with the additional cry for mercy which is found only in our form of it, was apparently the special work of Archbishop Cranmer, and is a remarkable testimony to his spiritual instinct and perception of words fitting to sinners in the presence of a Holy God.

19. **The Benediction.**—A characteristic form of the English Church with a wonderful fullness and beauty.

The Service, however, is not yet over, and the communicants naturally wait until the remaining Elements are consumed by the minister and those whom he may call for this purpose. This order of the Church is a most suitable preservative against superstition or irreverence. Against superstition, lest anyone should think of the Elements as charms and be led to reverence and adore them. Against irreverence, in order that that which has been set apart for a sacred use should not be used again in any other way. The value of the Rubric is evident, and everything is at once severely simple and beautifully reverent. When this has taken place, then, and then only, should the communicants rise and leave the Church.

20. **The Collects** are to be used at the discretion of the minister,

<sup>1</sup> See *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii, p. 326.

and will also be found most valuable for personal use by the communicants as occasion serves at the Holy Communion.

**21. The concluding Rubrics.**—Each of these directions has its own particular points of interest.

Rubric 1 gives instruction for the times when there is no Communion.

Rubric 2 gives discretion to the minister as to whether there shall be a Communion.

Rubric 3 states the number to be present ; three at least. The Lord's Supper is to be as our Lord instituted it, and not for solitary use by the Priest.

Rubric 4 orders weekly Communion, at least, in Cathedrals, Collegiate Churches, and Colleges.

Rubric 5 states that the Bread should be "such as is used to be eaten ; but the best and purest wheat bread that conveniently may be gotten." This Rubric, in providing for ordinary bread, gives the only possible opportunity of realizing that oneness in Christ among His people which is a special mark of St. Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. x. The words "it shall suffice," indicate a direction, and do not imply the alternative of wafer-bread, which, obviously, would not "take away all occasion of dissension and superstition." "What is substantially different will not 'suffice'" (Privy Council Judgment, *Ridsdale v. Clifton*, 1877). See also the Seventh Rubric and Canon 20.

Rubric 6 is concerned with the unconsecrated and the consecrated Bread and Wine. None of the latter is to be carried out of the Church. Each Celebration is thus complete in itself.

Rubric 7 deals with the provision of the Bread and Wine at the cost of the Parish.

Rubric 8 orders communicants to receive at least three times in the year, "of which Easter is to be one."

Rubric 9 deals with the disposal of the Elements.

Rubric 10 is called the "Black Rubric" because it was originally printed in black and not in red type in the Prayer Book.

(a) It explains the meaning of our receiving the Communion kneeling as an attitude of reverence and an expression of our thankfulness.

(b) It states that no adoration of the Elements is intended or of "any corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood."

This Rubric was first inserted in 1552 ; it was inadvertently omitted in the revision of 1559, and was re-instated in 1662, with the change from the word "real" to "corporal" presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. This change has no doctrinal significance because a Body, to be present, must be there really, corporally,

and locally. In the course of the century between 1552 and 1662, the ideas associated with the word "real" had become modified, and the term "real" of 1552 was exactly equivalent to the term "corporal" of 1662. It is obvious that the Lord's "natural" Flesh and Blood are the only Flesh and Blood that He ever had.<sup>1</sup>

Thus closes our Order for Holy Communion, and its beauty, appropriateness, and richness of experience are evident to every reader, and still more to those who have the privilege and joy of using it. It may be well worth while at this stage to collect and summarize the various phrases which give us the meaning of this Ordinance.

(a) It is a remembrance of our Master and only Saviour.

(b) It is a remembrance of His Death and the benefits we receive thereby.

(c) It is a means of grace.

(d) It is a cause and opportunity of thanksgiving.

(e) It is a call to a personal surrender of heart and life.

(f) It is an occasion of adoring praise to God.

Every part of our nature and need is met. The mind is taught the truth of God concerning the Holy Supper; the heart is encouraged and cheered by the assurance of God's grace and blessing; the soul is uplifted into fellowship with God and filled with His heavenly benediction, and the whole spiritual nature is so possessed by God that in grateful adoration it yields itself to Him to live to His glory.

22. **A few words of suggestion for right use** may perhaps close our consideration of this part of the Service.

(1) The fuller and deeper our spiritual preparation beforehand the more fully shall we enter into the spirit and power of the Service. The Exhortations can well be used as part of this preparation.

(2) As the Ante-Communion Service proceeds we should use it as a part of our preparation, asking ourselves, Do I truly repent of my sins? Do I steadfastly believe in my Saviour? Do I sincerely love God and man?

(3) We should enter heartily into every part of the Service, putting our whole soul into the Confession, listening earnestly and with faith to the Absolution and Comfortable Words, joining with heart and voice in the Thanksgiving, following meekly the Prayer of Humble Access, using our part in the Prayer of Consecration, and responding fully in the closing Prayer and Praise. Let us ever remember that the Service is one of Communion and calls for the spiritual interest and capacity of every communicant.

<sup>1</sup> See Goode's *Nature of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist*, p. 621; Dimock's *Vox Liturgiae Anglicanae*, p. 128.

(4) In going up to receive the Elements let us fix our mind and heart on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Let us remember that it is He Who gives us the blessing of His Body and Blood. Let us lift up our soul to Him, and as we receive the Bread and Wine feed on Christ in our hearts by faith.

(5) Any time of waiting before or after the actual reception should be spent in the meditation of Holy Scripture and prayer. Let us be occupied with Christ, not with ourselves, and at this time not even with our sins and needs; let us dwell upon Him, His grace, His power, His blessing, His sufficiency. The Psalms, especially xxiii, xxvii, xlvi, ciii, cxix, are particularly suitable for meditation; also John, xiv-xvii; Rom. viii; Eph. i; and similar portions of God's Word where God Himself is pre-eminently brought before us. This is the true attitude of the soul at Holy Communion, being occupied with great, objective, spiritual, divine realities rather than with our own particular needs.

(6) Let us return home quietly, restfully, thankfully, saying again and again in the old precious words of Hooker, "O my God, Thou art true; O my soul, thou art happy."

## CHAPTER VIII

### *THE LORD'S DAY*

THE Church provides for worship every day, and for special occasions during the year, but our worship necessarily finds its best occasion and highest opportunity on that one day in seven which God has consecrated as the Sabbath Day of the Old Testament and the Lord's Day of the New Covenant. It is fitting therefore, that we should give earnest attention to this remarkable provision for the life of man. Its place in our Prayer Book gives it special consideration.

1. **Its Institution.**—The Sabbath is one of the two institutions which are prior to the introduction of sin into the world. It is coeval with the completion of creation (Gen. ii), and is to be regarded as a permanent part of the constitution of things.

2. **Its observance in Old Testament times.**—The very wording of the fourth Commandment, "Remember," points to the Sabbath having existed prior to the Mosaic Law, and as being, therefore, independent of it. It is the only one of the ten Commandments which commences thus, and when we notice the story recorded four chapters before the giving of the Commandments



(Exod. xvi and xx) we see in it an insistence on the observance of this primeval law. We may also notice previous indications of a Sabbath in the fact of Noah reckoning by weeks (Gen. viii. 12), Laban and Jacob's similar method of reckoning (Gen. xxix. 27), and the same in Joseph's time (Gen. i. 3, 10). Thus the Sabbath is not, and never has been, exclusively Jewish, but human and universal, and grounded on the very nature of man from God's earliest revelation.

3. **Our Lord's relation to the Sabbath** is in keeping with all this. It is true that the Jews of His day had overwhelmed the true observance with a multitude of restrictions that practically destroyed the true idea of the Day, but nevertheless our Lord only set aside these accretions, and did not abrogate the Day itself. If the Lord intended that the Sabbath should disappear as part of the Jewish economy, it is difficult, indeed impossible, to conceive of His claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath just when the moment of abrogation was at hand. "The Sabbath was made for man," not for Jews only. This is one great principle laid down by the Lord Jesus, and the other is its complement; "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matt. xii. 8).

4. **The Sabbath in the Apostolic Church.**—There are evident indications of the observance of the first day of the week for the purpose of united worship. The disciples were together on the first Easter Day, and if that be regarded as a mere incident of the circumstances succeeding the Death of our Lord, we see the same in Acts xx. 7, and in St. Paul's directions in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. We need not press Rev. i. 10 into service, for there is a sufficient warrant for the observance without it.

The record of any transference of day from the seventh to the first is not to be expected. It was only gradually that the disciples were emancipated from Jewish ideas and customs, and doubtless for several, if not for many years, both days were observed. But in process of time circumstances made the former day impossible, while the fact of the Resurrection on the latter day made this especially appropriate for Christians; consequently we find a universal observance of the first day of the week in the time immediately succeeding the New Testament.

The fact is that the essence of Sabbath observance is not that of a certain day, but of a certain proportion of time. We must distinguish between the day and the institution. No one could now say with certainty that the Jewish seventh day is chronologically the seventh from Creation, for no one can tell us what was the actual first day of the world's history. So long as one day in seven is observed, both the spirit and the letter are obeyed, and as there

are very weighty reasons for the first day of the week we can readily see that the essential idea of the institution is thoroughly preserved.

5. **The Church of England**, inheriting the Scriptural teaching and example of Old and New Testament times, and the history of nineteen centuries, makes a special provision for the observance of the Lord's Day. There are special Lessons, special Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, and provision for celebrating the Lord's Supper. Everything that can be done to mark the Day has been done, and we shall do well to adhere closely to the lines laid down for us.

6. But what are **the essential elements of the Divine Purpose** of the Lord's Day?

(a) It is to be a Day of Rest. This is a call to realize our duty to ourselves. Body, mind, and soul need rest. Poise and equilibrium come from rest after the toil and care of the week. This fact is wrought into our very nature, and we must have one day in seven for rest. The frequent allusions to seven in the Old Testament is a significant indication of how the idea of sevenfoldness is impressed upon the constitution of the universe.

(b) It is to be a Day of Worship. This is a call to realize our duty to God. The observance of one day in seven is a testimony to the consecration of our time, and a constant reminder of the claim of God upon the life. Not that we are to use six days for ourselves and one for God, but all seven for God, and one for special worship and fellowship. We are to "serve Him truly all the days of our life," and yet to keep one day pre-eminently for Him. It is a reminder of the need of the occupation of our souls with God, and of the call to meditation, fellowship, and adoration.

(c) It is to be a Day of Service. This is a call to realize our duty to others. It is an opportunity to do good, and to minister to others the blessings of the Gospel of Christ. "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath Day" (Matt. xii. 12).

7. **The Blessings of the Day are Evident.**—First and foremost it is a simple yet striking and constant witness for God and His claim upon the life of man. It is also a help for man's own needs, a pause in order that he may gather force for future life and service, an opportunity to concentrate in order to diffuse blessings. Last, but not least, it is a foretaste of eternity, of the rest, worship and service that remain to the people of God (*see* Isa. lviii. 13, 14).

8. **Our Duty.**—Let us value it by using its opportunities, enjoying its privileges, fulfilling its obligations, and experiencing its blessings. Let us safeguard it by using our influence with those around us, by setting an example to others, by reducing our work and the work of others to a minimum, by bearing testimony against its non-observance, and by realizing that our individual, social, and

national life and prosperity depend upon a well-kept Sabbath. If there is one thing to which may be attributed the blessing of God on "this Church and realm" through the past centuries, it is the national observance of the Lord's Day. Let us take care that we hand on unimpaired to future generations this priceless blessing of God.

## CHAPTER IX

### *THE CHRISTIAN YEAR*

ONE of the essential features of our Church's worship and Services is the observance of the Christian Year, the continual and regular association of the different parts of the year with certain facts of the history of the revelation of God in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1. The Clear Outline.**—The Christian Year is divided into two parts.

(a) Part 1: Advent to Trinity.

(b) Part 2: the Sundays after Trinity.

Part 1 is concerned with the unfolding of the stages of the history of our Lord's Person and work, leading up to the full revelation of God as Triune. Advent calls our attention to the First and Second Comings of the Lord; first in His great humility, and then in His glorious Majesty, and we are thereby prepared for the Christmas season. The gift and reality of the Incarnation now come to view, and we celebrate the coming of "the Word made Flesh." The early days and years of our Lord's earthly life follow in the season of Epiphany, though associated with this is the thought of His Kingship, as indicated by the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the Sundays. Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima form together the transitional period before Lent, with its reminder of Temptation and Suffering. Then comes the great week of our Lord's Passion and Death, culminating in His glorious Resurrection. The Great Forty Days are next brought to our notice, with their revelation of the risen Christ. Ascension Day follows, then Whit Sunday, and thus the various stages whereby our Lord wrought redemption for us are passed in review, each with its own fact and message. Last of all, we have the revelation of Trinity Sunday, and, as we have seen, the doctrine of the Trinity emerges out of our Lord's Incarnation. Very fittingly, therefore, this Sunday is the culmination of all that has gone before.

Part 2 consists of the Sundays after Trinity, in which we may observe the response of man to this revelation of God. The Lessons taught on each Sunday are mainly on practical topics, though the great doctrinal foundations are never out of sight. On the very first Sunday after Trinity, in the Epistle, we are reminded afresh of the gift of God to the world. Thus after doctrine comes duty, and yet duty always arising out of doctrine. Conduct must come out of Creed, and it can only come from this source. Conduct may be, as it has been urged, three-fourths of life, but the other one-fourth is the foundation upon which the superstructure rests. The Sundays after Trinity are intended to remind us very especially of "the daily round, the common task."

2. **The Priceless Value.**—The primary importance and preciousness of the Christian Year is its emphasis on facts as the foundation of doctrine and life. Christianity is a religion of fact, not of theory, and all essential doctrine arises out of the facts of our Lord's manifestation. These facts are intended to be factors and forces of human life in relation to God, and it is the pre-eminent value of the Christian Year that it brings this before us in no uncertain way.

The value of proportion in Christian truth is also evident and important; the successive facts in their order and arrangement prevent individual bias, and keep congregations from depending upon the personal idiosyncrasies and spiritual experiences of the particular clergy who are over them in the Lord. Even if the sermons are not drawn from the Services for the day, the gradual unfolding of revelation is a helpful reminder and application of "the proportion of faith." Moreover, the Christian Year offers continual and wonderful variety of teaching while adhering to the great foundation realities, and the best testimony to its value is the almost entirely universal observance of it to a greater or less degree, even in Churches which do not follow the system in full detail.

3. **The Possible Danger.**—The observance of the Christian Year undoubtedly has certain risks. We must take great care and watch against routine, lest the very familiarity tend to rob us of the precious experience and spiritual power derivable from its due use. This is true generally of reading even the Gospels, but there is perhaps special reason for the warning in connexion with the Christian Year. We must also beware of a wrong perspective in our observance. Although Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Good Friday are repeated in our observance year by year, it is not altogether superfluous to remind ourselves that these events are not enacted over again each year by our Lord. It may seem unnecessary to state this, but there is a subtle temptation to forget the Easter and Whitsuntide perspective from which we should view all spiritual



realities. Christmas is indeed precious, but the Lord is not in the manger. Lent is undoubtedly helpful, but the Lord is not in the wilderness. Good Friday is truly heart-stirring, but the Lord is not on the Cross. He is on the Throne, and now it is always Easter, and always Pentecost to the disciples of Christ. It is possible to make the mistake of passing through Lent and looking forward to Easter blessings as though they were not available until that day dawned. One of our well-known hymns for Easter puts these words into our lips—

“Come then, True and Faithful, now fulfil Thy Word;  
 ’Tis Thine own third morning; Rise my buried Lord!”

Even poetic licence hardly warrants our using such words, for “Jesus Christ is risen to-day” is true at all times. And if we only keep before us the Easter perspective we shall enter into all the blessings of the Christian Year with added power and joy. Every fact will become luminous with meaning and instinct with blessing. The great glory of the Christian Year is that it fixes our gaze on Christ as living, reigning, and coming, and when the soul is occupied with Him in all the plenitude of His grace and glory, the result will always be holiness, power, influence, and usefulness in daily living.

## CHAPTER X

### *SPECIAL OCCASIONS*

IN addition to the ordinary worship of Sunday and weekday the Church has made provision for special and exceptional occasions in the course of the Christian Year by means of the Festivals and Fast Days.

**1. The Festivals or Saints’ Days.**—In the Calendar there are to be found two classes of Saints’ Days, one class generally called “Red Letter Saints’ Days,” because of the special Services provided, the other called “Black Letter Saints’ Days,” with the names simply put in the Calendar. The Black Letter Saints’ Days commemorate a number of leading names in the Western Church, especially Saints of Gaul and Britain, but their retention in the Calendar at the Reformation did not carry with it any special Services. They were retained principally for convenience in remembering particular dates. Almanacs were unknown then, and such information as was needed could only be obtained by means of the Church Calendars.

"The principle of selection is not always easy to discern, and in many cases may have been affected by deference to old custom, general or local, and even by connexion with secular anniversaries. But, on the whole, the commemorations incline to do special honour to martyrs, and to saints connected either with the English or the Gallican Church. It is to be noted that they are not marked in the Church of England by any special religious observance, and therefore stand on an altogether different footing from the 'red letter days.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Red Letter Festivals or Saints' Days commemorate certain facts in the life of our Lord or in the lives of some of those associated with Him, as recorded in the New Testament. These are thirty-six in number, and they are spread over the whole year, each having its own Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, and special Lesson or Lessons. The series properly commences with St. Andrew's Day, one of the first two Christians (John i. 40), and closes with All Saints' Day, when we commemorate and praise God for all those who have "departed this life in His faith and fear."

The value and preciousness of these Saints' Days lie in the fact that they bring before us the marvellous variety of the grace of God, as exemplified in the life of Christians, illustrating what St. Peter calls the "many coloured" grace of God (1 Pet. iv. 10). The character and life of the men and women of old remind us of the many ways in which it is possible to serve and glorify God: some in weakness, some in strength, some in suffering, some in service, some in places of quietness, some in positions of danger; all lived to Him and His eternal praise. The record in Scripture and the Services for each day call on us to follow them as they followed Christ, and in this way we shall use the days to our great and endless profit. The Collects tell their own story, not by praising those commemorated, but by pointing us to Christ and His grace as the secret and the power of these holy men of old. There is no glorification of the Saints themselves, but only of their Master; this is especially noticeable in the Collects for the Feasts of the Purification and the Annunciation, where the Mother of our Lord is not even mentioned. "Christ is all" is the keynote of these Festivals.

Not the least helpful feature of these celebrations is their witness to the unity and solidarity of the Christian Church in all ages. We are encouraged by a great "cloud of witnesses." We have already come (not, shall come) to "the general assembly and Church of the firstborn" (Heb. xii. 22, 23). We are the heirs of the Christian ages, and neither without them shall we be made perfect, nor without us will they receive their full consummation. The Church of Christ requires every saint to make up the unity of the Body of its Lord. Not only the well-known leaders and mighty warriors of the host,

<sup>1</sup> *Teacher's Prayer Book*, by Bishop Barry, p. 16; see also, *Tomlinson's Prayer Book, Articles and Homilies*, pp. 5, 6.

but those unknown to men (yet known to Christ) are essential to the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. The individual Christian is never solitary, but is one of the great host of God's chosen ones, all of whom will one day appear with Christ above to the praise of the glory of His grace.

" One family, we dwell in Him,  
One Church, above, beneath."

**2. The Fast Days.**—Our Church has not only provided Festivals of joy, but occasions of fasting, thus emphasizing the two aspects of the Christian life. These latter days are distinguished as Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence. The Vigils are the evenings before certain Holy Days, seventeen in number throughout the year. The Days of Fasting are the Forty Days of Lent, the two Ember Days four times a year, the three Rogation Days before Ascension Day, and all the Fridays of the year. The Fast Day is perhaps to be distinguished from the Day of Abstinence as an entire Fast is distinguished from a partial one. No Services are prescribed for these Fasts with the exception of the Litany for Fridays, and the Services on Ash Wednesday. On the Rogation Days, that is, the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day, the Litany is evidently the appropriate form. These Days of "asking" (*rogare*) were originally associated with prayer for the blessings of the harvest, and offer a helpful opportunity for united special intercession for temporal and spiritual blessings. The Ember Days are the days appointed for intercession for those about to be ordained. The derivation of the word "Ember" is doubtful. The original idea of these days seems to have been the observance of a Fast at each of the four seasons of the year, but later on these Fasts became associated with Ordinations, which probably followed the Fast. The present use is a clear indication of the importance assigned by our Church to the need and provision of a faithful ministry.

As to fasting in general, we see clearly in the Old Testament that it was a necessary part of Jewish worship and ceremonial. The practice was also continued by John the Baptist and his disciples, but, as it would seem, not by our Lord and His disciples during the time of His earthly ministry (Mark ii. 19). Fasting is also found in the Apostolic Church (Acts xiii. 1, 2). It is noteworthy that while the New Testament is very clear, strict, and detailed with reference to moral and spiritual life, "very little is said of what we may call the outward discipline of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

"There are no exhortations to fasting, though it would seem that St. Paul himself practised it (2 Cor. vi. 5; xi. 27); except in these two passages, the

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Strong's *Authority in Religion*, p. 67.

word is not used by St. Paul ; nor is the practice enjoined in the New Testament." <sup>1</sup>

" It is remarkable that no positive instructions whatever are found in the New Testament on a point like this. General exhortations to self-control are there in plenty, but, even in connexion with people whose failing seems to have been self-indulgence, no disciplinary rules." <sup>2</sup>

This is just what we would expect, for Christianity is a religion of principles, not of rules, of inward spirit rather than of outward discipline. It aims at purifying the mind, possessing the heart, enlightening the conscience, and controlling the will. When these inner elements of our nature are under the influence of the Spirit of God, outward life and discipline naturally follow.

In strict keeping with this New Testament teaching the Church of England has laid down no rules and regulations for fasting. She provides and orders the Days, but the precise forms and degrees of fasting are left to the individual Christian. We ask for grace to " use such abstinence that the flesh may be subdued to the spirit " (Collect for the First Sunday in Lent). The principle of the New Testament is thus followed. Fasting, properly understood, is not to be limited to abstinence from food, though that is a very salutary part of it. Fasting and prayer are clearly associated in Scripture ; fasting is at once a means and symbol of *detachment* from things earthly, while prayer is a means of *attachment* to things heavenly. When the soul is thus detached from that which would drag it down and also attached to that which uplifts and blesses, it finds its true life, and realizes God's ideal. Like St. Paul we thus say, " All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any " (1 Cor. vi. 12). It is a great mistake and may lead to spiritual disaster to think that abstinence from pleasure and food during Lent, followed by indulgence after Easter, represents the mind of the New Testament and of the Christian Church. By no means is this the case, for the Christian life is ever to be a life of temperance, self-control, and discipline, and while it is profitable to have special occasions for special abstinence, the attitude of the whole life is " under law to Christ." We may well be thankful for the wonderful balance and spiritual instinct of our Reformers, and their keen penetration into the conditions and characteristics of the Christian life ; they provide for every side of our experience and need.

In the light of the foregoing insistence upon individual responsibility about Fasting and Abstinence it will be readily understood that the Church of England knows nothing of any dispensations to be granted, or any exemptions from the principles and rules laid down. The Church is content with insistence on great principles,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 68.



leaving their application to the enlightened conscience of each individual believer.

## CHAPTER XI

### OCCASIONAL SERVICES

THE Church has made special provision for particular events in Christian life and worship from the earliest days to the end. The thought of Christianity as intended to cover everything in human affairs is nowhere more clearly seen. The Gospel touches life at every point, and the provision made by our Church is a striking testimony to the inclusive and universal interest of the Christian Church in all that concerns individual life and circumstances.

Detailed information as to the various offices is impossible in the space at our command. We must be content to refer the reader to such works as Bishop Barry's most valuable *Teacher's Prayer Book*, in which will be found full and interesting accounts of these Forms of Service.

1. **The Litany.**—This familiar and beautiful Service of Intercession is ordered to be used on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, after Morning Prayer. As a Service it is complete in itself, and it would seem as though it was originally intended for use alone, without Morning Prayer. It consists of two main divisions: (1) Part I: ending with the last Petition. (2) Part II: from "Lord have mercy upon us" to the end. The former section is more regular and systematic, while the latter consists of a number of separate and more irregular petitions.

Part I is usually divided by the character of its intercessions—

(a) Introductory appeal to each Person of the Sacred Trinity. In the first petition there should be a comma after "Father," for the phrase "of heaven" means "from heaven" (Latin, *de coelis*). The English word "miserable" is the equivalent of the Latin *miser* (wretched), and is descriptive of the general and universal result of sin in human life.

(b) Deprecations. These include all the prayers in which we ask protection against various forms of evil ("From all evil and mischief," etc.).

(c) Obsecrations. Prayers based on our Lord's Person and work ("By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation").

(d) Petitions. These include all the intercessions for others and the general prayers for ourselves, closing with the solemn and

searching petition to "endue us with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to Thy Holy Word."

Part II is not so easily divided by reason of its less regular arrangement. The prevalent tone of this part is one of sorrow on account of sin and sadness in view of trial and persecution.

The wonderful comprehensiveness of the Litany is the feature that strikes most readers. Perhaps it only requires two or three more petitions, such as the one in the American Prayer Book, "That it may please Thee to send forth labourers into Thy harvest," to make it an almost perfect form of intercessory prayer.

2. **Occasional Prayers and Thanksgiving.**—These Forms date almost entirely from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and call attention to various needs, both national and ecclesiastical, for which prayer is offered. A careful comparison of their composition with the translations from the terse, vigorous Latin of the earlier Collects shows a tendency to greater diffuseness of expression, but the very difference is helpful in its provision of variety of utterance in public prayer. Of these occasional Forms the Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men and the General Thanksgiving are particularly noticeable for their comprehensiveness and beauty. In many churches the General Thanksgiving is repeated with the minister, after the model of the General Confession, but this, though exceedingly appropriate and helpful, does not appear to have been contemplated in the revision of 1662. The Ember Prayers are also worthy of special note. The former of the two is intended for use in the early part of the Ember week before the choice of the candidate for the ministry has been actually made. The latter assumes that the choice has been made, and prays for blessing accordingly. The use of these prayers in private devotions as well as in the public services will be found a valuable link of fellowship between pastor and people, a means of blessing to the ministry of the Church as a whole.

3. **The Solemnization of Matrimony.**—Without entering fully into the details of this Service we may notice the following points—

(a) The whole Service shows that the Form is to be used for Christian people, following the Apostolic injunction of marriage "only in the Lord."

(b) There is a solemn reminder at the outset of the spiritual meaning of the Marriage Rite, "signifying to us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church."

(c) The earthly aspects of Christian marriage are equally dwelt upon and emphasized.

(d) The Church lays down no rule as to the times of year in which marriage is to be solemnized. Marriages are, of course, legal at any time, within the prescribed hours.

(e) The characteristic emphasis of the Church of England on instruction is seen in the introductory exhortation and the closing provision for Sermon or Address.

(f) The object of the second part of the Service being taken at the Holy Table is evidently as an introduction to the Holy Communion, which is regarded in the Rubric as "convenient," that is, fitting and appropriate on such an occasion.

Leaving the Baptismal Services for separate discussion, we notice now—

4. **The Churching of Women.**—The full title is to be observed. "The Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth, commonly called the Churching of Women." It is interesting to see how the older title has prevailed in ordinary usage. The Service is necessarily analogous to the similar Jewish observance, though, of course, without the idea of ceremonial purification. From first to last, as the title states, it is a Service of Thanksgiving, and as such is peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of the one who comes, as well as signifying the interest of the Christian community in all that concerns the life and welfare of its individual members.

The closing Rubric again rightly calls attention to the "convenience" or appropriateness of the Holy Communion at such a time, for one of its notes is that of "thanksgiving" (Greek of Matt. xxvi. 26, 27).

5. **The Visitation of the Sick.**—Again the mind of our Church is clearly seen in the strong and emphatic prominence given to instruction and exhortation. After the opening prayers come two earnest appeals and an inquiry into the sick man's faith, as indicated by the rehearsal of the Creed. The Rubrics as to the sick man's state of life in relation to others, as well as the disposal of his property, next call for attention, and then comes a special instruction to the minister which should be carefully studied. "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which Confession, the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort."

We should notice that this is entirely optional and conditional. It is only if the man should "feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter," and also the Absolution is only to be granted "if he humbly and heartily desire it." The words of the Absolution are as follows—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The following considerations are to be observed in the study of this Form—

(a) This is the only Service of our Church in which the minister is at liberty to use or not use the Service as he thinks fit. The phrase “after this sort,” together with the Order of Canon 67, shows this unique feature of an option given to the Minister.

(b) The Absolution is partly in the form of a Prayer and partly in the form of a Declaration.

(c) The phrase “Who hath left power to His Church” must refer either to Matt. xviii. 18, or John xx. 22, 23, or, more probably, to both. Very carefully and Scripturally it is stated that the power has been left to the *Church*, not to the ministry. The minister here speaks as the representative of the whole Church.

(d) The *Prayer* is for sins against God, according to John xx. 22, 23. The *Declaration* is as to sins against the Church, according to Matt. xviii. 18. The Form is therefore a blending of the proclamation of the Gospel of God’s forgiveness and the exercise of Church discipline.

(e) Then follows a prayer for God’s mercy. This shows that the Absolution already pronounced cannot refer to sins against God, otherwise there would be no need to pray for mercy if the man were already absolved.

(f) The prayer includes a request that the sick man may be “preserved and continued” in the unity of the Church. This shows that the Declaration of the Absolution refers to sins and offences against the Church, for having been absolved from them he has already been restored, and now the prayer is that he may be “preserved” in the unity of the Church.

We can therefore see what a Scriptural and beautiful provision the Church makes for a special case of this kind, in which the person is presumably at the point of death and wishes to be assured of the forgiveness of God and of his fellow-Christians. The minister thereupon prays that he may have God’s forgiveness, and at the same time assures him of the forgiveness of his fellow-Christians. This special and unique provision is one of the most remarkable testimonies of what may be called the spiritual experience and perception of the Reformers of the sixteenth century and their deep and profound knowledge of the human heart in the time of sickness of body and trouble of soul.<sup>1</sup>

The remaining Service needs no special comment, nor the four beautiful Collects at the close. The last of these, “A Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience,” is particularly suitable to cases of troubled conscience referred to above, and also to those

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion, see Drury, *Confession and Absolution*.



dealt with in the Holy Communion Service. The time of sickness is a great opportunity for thought and genuine heart-to-heart dealing with God, and in this Service the Church provides everything possible for the maintenance of right relation with God, or of restoration in the case of those who, in time of health, have forgotten their Maker and their Saviour.

**6. The Communion of the Sick.**—This is the complement of the foregoing Service. The introductory Rubric is significant in its urgent appeal for regular public Communion in time of health. The essence of our Lord's institution of the Holy Communion is its social character. Provision for the Communion of the Sick is then made, and again we notice the requirement of at least two to be present with the minister, unless under the very exceptional circumstances contemplated by the concluding Rubric of the Service.

The special Collect, Epistle, and Gospel are at once appropriate to the spiritual circumstances and to the need of extreme brevity in the case of illness.

Of the concluding Rubrics the only one needing attention is the third, which is a striking testimony to the real meaning of the Church of England on Holy Communion.

“ But if a man, either by extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Church, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, the Curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed His Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his Soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.”

In this Rubric the term “ Sacrament ” is evidently the outward sign, as in Article XXVIII, and the sick man is assured that on his true repentance and steadfast faith he “ doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his Soul's health,” even though he cannot take the outward sign or Sacrament in his mouth. Thus again, as in the Catechism, Communion Service, and Articles, our Church distinguishes between the outward and the inward parts of the Ordinance, keeping them perfectly separate, never confusing or identifying them, and lifting up the soul to Christ that it may feed on Him in the heart by faith. The importance of this Rubric, as giving us the mind of our Church on the real relation between the outward sign and the inward grace, can hardly be exaggerated.

**7. The Burial of the Dead.**—The following points in the Service are to be noticed—

(a) It is intended for Christians only. The body of one who was

brought to God in Baptism, then was confirmed and became a communicant, and who entered into all the Services of the Church, is here committed to the ground as that of a brother or sister in Christ. This simple fact should be carefully remembered in any consideration of the appropriateness of the office. It is obviously impossible for the Christian Church to provide any Service, whether Burial or other, for those who make no profession of the Christian religion.

"The Service was drawn up at a time when it was presumed, first, that all Englishmen would be members of the Church of England, and next, that there would be such Church discipline as would place under censure and excommunication all who were guilty of open and scandalous sin. It was framed accordingly, and all difficulties which have since attached to its use arise from the failure in these two pre-supposed conditions." <sup>1</sup>

(b) The larger part of the Service has clearly in view, not the one who is dead, but the living around the grave. It is an opportunity afforded to them of earnest thought and prayer concerning their own lives.

(c) The references to the dead are singularly beautiful and simple. They are described as being "in joy and felicity," and as "sleeping in Jesus." No prayer is made for them for the simple reason that with such a description of their state prayer is unnecessary. The prayer in the Service is for ourselves, that we may come to "the unspeakable joys" of those who are in the immediate presence of their Lord.

8. **The Commination Service.**—This is intended for use on Ash Wednesday, "and other times as the Ordinary shall appoint." The sub-title of this Service is noteworthy: "Or of the Denouncing of God's Anger and Judgments against Sinners." The Service is eminently characteristic of the circumstances of the Reformation. When private auricular confession was done away, the Church substituted for this the public Confession and Absolution of the Daily Services and Holy Communion, together with this Form for the first day of Lent. The Reformers, knowing of the strict public discipline of the early Church wished to revive it in order that the Church might be kept pure and free from scandal and inconsistency of life but as the circumstances of the times made revival impossible, they provided this Service as a reminder of what God would have us be and do. It is a revelation of the Divine attitude to sin and need of constant genuine repentance. Perhaps the letter of the former part of the Service breathes somewhat too much of the spirit of the Old Testament to be entirely consistent with New Testament spirituality, but when we remember how sin is disregarded among those who profess and call themselves Christians, we cannot say that

<sup>1</sup> *Teacher's Prayer Book*, by Bishop Barry, p. 168.

the need of sternness has passed away. The spirit and motive of the Service are as admirable as they are necessary, and a deeper consciousness of sin would be an undoubted spiritual advantage to the life of the whole Church.

9. **Prayers for those at Sea.**—These were added in 1662, and mark the time when the British Navy was becoming developed and organized. They show the true idea of union between Church and State in the acknowledgment of God as the Ruler of earth and sea.

10. **The Accession Service.**—This Service is enjoined by Royal Proclamation at the beginning of each reign. Its full legal and ecclesiastical obligation does not seem to be quite on the level of the rest of the Prayer Book, probably owing to the fact that it is regarded as a State Service. It contains the beautiful Prayer for that Unity which is unhappily so greatly lacking in the Christian Church.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BAPTISMAL SERVICES

WE have already considered the meaning of the Ordinance of Baptism and the general position of the Church with reference to it. We must now study the Services in which the meaning and purpose are brought out. It will be remembered that the full idea of Baptism includes a Divine side and a human side. On the one hand God marks us as His own, and designates us to receive all the blessings associated with union with Himself. On the other hand, there are certain conditions attached to our reception and enjoyment of these blessings.

*Q.* What is required of persons to be baptized?

*A.* Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.

On these two sides the Public Baptismal Service is built up. The fundamental idea is that of a Covenant or solemn agreement in which God pledges Himself to us and we pledge ourselves to Him.

1. **Part I: The Divine Offer of Covenant Blessings.**—In this we have the opening Exhortation, the first and second Collects, and the Gospel from Mark. x with its Exhortation. The opening address emphasizes the need of spiritual regeneration and calls for prayer. The Collects are full of earnest teaching and appeal with reference to spiritual blessing. The Gospel shows our Lord's loving words and attitude to little children (Luke xviii. 16), and the

Exhortation appeals to us to remember His good-will toward them, and not to doubt of its application to the child to be baptized.

2. **Part II : The Acceptance of Covenant Blessings.**—The sponsors are addressed and told of the two sides of the Covenant, and are asked certain questions relating to the human conditions of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience as requirements for Baptism.<sup>1</sup> Then come four short petitions for blessing on the child. In this section the human side naturally comes very prominently in view.

3. **Part III : The Sealing of Covenant Blessings.**—This opens with a Prayer of Consecration analogous to that in the Holy Communion, where the water is consecrated or set apart for the mystical washing away of sin ; i.e. the symbolical or sacramental washing. Then comes the actual Baptism into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The signing of the Cross appropriately follows, with its reminder of the Christian warfare, and this section closes with a short appeal to those present to pray for the child.

4. **Part IV : The Outcome of Covenant Blessings.**—The Lord's Prayer beautifully opens this part, and then follow Thanksgiving and Prayer in which the spiritual grace associated with, symbolized in, and pledged by Baptism is again emphasized. The Service closes with two characteristic Exhortations to the sponsors, emphasizing their personal responsibility and reminding them of the meaning of Baptism to themselves and to the child. "Remembering always that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession ; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him."

5. **The following points in the Service** need careful attention and study—

(a) The introductory Rubric, admonishing the people that it is most "convenient" (appropriate) that Baptism should be administered when the largest number of people are present, has unfortunately become virtually annulled through custom, since the length of the ordinary Services together with the Baptismal Service renders it most difficult to carry out. Yet it is devoutly to be wished that there could be a revival of the practice, for it would be of immense spiritual blessing to all concerned. The second Rubric, as to Sponsors, is a special and additional precaution, in order that the Christian nurture and education of the child may be as far as possible guaranteed. Sponsorship is intended to be a very solemn reality in our Baptismal Service, and any formality attached to it

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that although their faith is pre-supposed, the sponsors do not vicariously offer their repentance, faith and obedience on behalf of the child. They undertake these conditions in the child's name, the child itself accepting them personally in Confirmation.—G. W. B.



in present usage cannot be laid to the charge of the Church of England, nor is it to be entertained for an instant that formality should set aside such a peculiarly appropriate and valuable provision. Abuse never sets aside right use, and the frequent insistence upon the solemnity of sponsorship is very essential if our Baptismal Service is to be properly carried out.

(b) The meaning of Regeneration. It is usually thought that the word is to be applied to spiritual blessing and not merely to ecclesiastical privilege and opportunity. It may well be that the meaning of the word in the sixteenth century differed from that of to-day, and referred only to a new spiritual and moral condition or circumstance or sphere, as in Matt. xix. 28.<sup>1</sup> In the opening Exhortation, Regeneration is regarded as equivalent to being "born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost." In the second Collect we have the phrase "spiritual regeneration," and in the words following the Administration of Baptism, regeneration is regarded as equivalent to being "grafted into the body of Christ's Church."

(c) The words, "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate," are to be regarded as the result and outcome of the whole preceding Service, with its insistence upon the human conditions of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. "Seeing now" is a technical phrase. It marks the announcement or publication of the fact already accomplished in the actual administration of Baptism. It is as though it were said: "You can see for yourselves." The doctrine of the Church on the Sacraments shows that the mere administration of an Ordinance cannot possibly guarantee spiritual blessing, and the fulfilment of conditions is always laid down as essential. Article XXVII speaks of them "that receive Baptism rightly." Our Church attributes no efficacy to the Sacraments irrespective of conditions, and so she attempts to make provision for the fulfilling of these conditions. "In such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation" (Article XXV).<sup>2</sup>

(d) The Rubric gives preference to immersion as the mode of Baptism, though allowing pouring as equally valid and quite sufficient.

(e) The signing of the Cross is retained as an old custom, though it is clearly taught by Canon 30 to be not of the essence of the

<sup>1</sup> This was certainly the view of many seventeenth and eighteenth-century divines.—G. W. B.

<sup>2</sup> Two further points may be made in this connexion: first, that the Bible (and the Reformers) do not lay down any necessary connexion in time between the sign and the thing signified; and second, that no man can ever judge definitively in respect of inward regeneration. In these circumstances the pronouncement has necessarily an external (or hypothetical) character.

Baptismal rite, but is retained as an appropriate reminder of the warfare of the Christian life and of our duty to confess Christ and to glory in the Cross.

(f) The Rubric as to Infant Salvation is to be read in the light of the great and fundamental position of the Church on Sacraments already referred to, in which those who receive rightly are assured of blessing. In answer to Faith and Prayer, to the promise of the Gospel, and to the response of the Sureties, the Church rightly assumes that God has been true to His Word, and so it says: "It is certain by God's Word that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." The principle and meaning of the Church in this statement can be seen from the fact that the original form of words has this significant addition, "and else not." Their omission shows that there is no absolute necessity of this Ordinance to salvation, and that the mere administration is not to be regarded as a guarantee of grace.

(g) The full, rich, spiritual language of the whole Service needs and warrants our very careful attention. Our Reformers used what is rightly called "sacramental language," that is, they used interchangeably the names of the sign and of the thing signified. They considered that all received blessing sacramentally or symbolically, but not of necessity really. They did not hesitate to speak of the baptized as sacramentally regenerate, without expressing any opinion as to their being really regenerate. It is very noteworthy that the Puritans in their detailed and strong objections to many parts of our Prayer Book, do not seem to have objected at all to the phrase, "Seeing now . . . that this child is regenerate."

"It is significant that the words, 'Seeing now that this child is regenerate,' are not found in the First Prayer Book, but in the Second, when the Reformation 'was full blown.' Bucer and Peter Martyr passed no note of disapprobation of the Office, and in his new Cologne Service Book, in 1543, Bucer actually inserted the very statement we are considering, viz., 'Seeing that this child is regenerate.' For more than a century after the Reformation the Church was Calvinistic. Calvinism had possession of the Episcopacy, Universities, and Theological Faculties; it was supreme; its interpretation of the Baptismal Office was dominant and authoritative, and it was the hypothetical interpretation. The Puritans, keen-sighted and jealous, never objected to this statement of the Office, though objecting to much else that it contained. The 'Ecclesiastical Polity' of Hooker was written to answer Puritan objections; we find sponsors, the sign of the Cross, etc., complained of, but not this seemingly literal statement."<sup>1</sup>

Archbishop Whitgift rightly said that the Elements do not contain grace, but are signs and seals of grace. As the Homily clearly puts it, "Sacraments are visible signs to which are annexed promises," and our faith is to exercise itself in the remembrance of our Baptism, in order to the possession and enjoyment of a full blessing. It

<sup>1</sup> Barnes-Lawrence, in *The Churchman*, April, 1902.

should ever be borne in mind that the language of the New Testament, which describes the blessings associated with and pledged in Baptism, refers to adults and not to unconscious children, and it is only by necessary accommodation and modification that we can use the same language of the latter. This modification is sometimes called the language of charitable or loving assumption, for the child is rightly assumed to be, and is afterwards taught to regard itself as, within the covenant of grace by reason of the faith and prayer of those who bring him to Baptism. This faith and hope is the special mark of our Baptismal Service.

The faith of parents and sponsors is encouraged to lay hold of the promises and assurance of God, and parents are to be taught to make the time of their children's Baptism the starting-point of all instruction and discipline, by reminding them of the pledge, seal, and assurance thereby granted of the grace of God. The seal carries with it personal responsibility as well as the promise of grace, and the truth of the whole matter is very clearly summed up in the words of Archbishop Ussher already quoted but which are worth repeating here—

“As Baptism administered to those of years is not effectual unless they believe, so we can make no comfortable use of our Baptism administered in our infancy until we believe. All the promises of grace were in my Baptism estated upon me, and sealed up unto me on God's part; but then I come to have the profit and benefit of them when I come to understand what grant God in Baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually lay hold on it by faith.”<sup>1</sup>

**6. Private Baptism.**—The introductory Rubric gives the mind of the Church on the time and circumstances of Baptism.

(a) It is to be administered as soon as possible after birth unless there is good cause to the contrary.

(b) It is not to be administered in houses unless necessary. Publicity and fellowship are again emphasized as the mind of the Church.

(c) Prayer must precede Baptism.

Then follows the Baptism itself and the Thanksgiving in the words of the Public Office of Baptism.

The following Rubric assures us of the sufficiency of this Baptism, but at the same time orders the public reception of the child in Church if it should live. The Service of Reception mainly follows the Office for Public Baptism, in which the Sponsors are reminded of the conditions of blessing, and their part in the Christian education of the baptized child.

**7. Baptism in Riper Years.** The Preface to the Prayer Book gives the reason why this Service was added in 1662—

<sup>1</sup> Pages 111-2.

"Because 'by the growth of Anabaptism . . . it is now become necessary,' and 'may be always useful for the baptizing of Natives in our Plantations and others converted to the faith.'"

It is modelled on the Service for Infants, with the necessary modifications—

- (a) A Rubric as to appropriate instruction beforehand.
- (b) A recognition of actual as well as of original sin.
- (c) A different Gospel and Exhortation.
- (d) Necessary verbal changes in the Prayers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *THE ORDINAL*

It is abundantly evident in all parts of the Prayer Book with what "reverend estimation" the Ministry is held in the Church of England, and the Ordinal or Form and Manner of ordaining the Ministry has been drawn up by our Church for the purpose of continuing the Orders of Ministry, and that they may ever be "reverently used and esteemed." A careful study of the Ordination Services affords clear proof of what the Ministry is, and is intended to do.

#### **1. The Ordering of Deacons.**

(a) The Office. The word "Deacon" simply means servant, and from the fact that the Seven in Acts vi were said to "serve" they are sometimes called the Seven Deacons, and are often, but without historical proof, identified with the Deacons mentioned in 1 Tim. iii. 8-13. The original purpose of the appointment in Acts vi was that of secular work in order that the Apostles might be set free for spiritual service, but very soon the work of the Seven extended beyond that of "serving tables," for we read of Stephen doing miracles, and of Philip evangelizing in Samaria and elsewhere (Acts vi and viii).

(b) The care of the Church to prevent unworthy Ordination. The Archdeacon gives his assurance to the Bishop that he has examined the candidates, and the Bishop affords the congregation full opportunity to object on moral and other grounds.

(c) The questions to the ordinand are to be noted. They are seven in number, and include searching enquiries first as to his spiritual call, then as to his adhesion to the Church of England, then as to his belief in the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and then as to his faithfulness in service, consistency of life, and



loyalty to authority. Nothing could well be more solemn and searching, or more thoroughly inclusive of the duties of the Ministry.

(*d*) The actual ordination by the laying on of hands then follows, together with the solemn delivery of the New Testament. Laying on of hands in the New Testament, as we have seen (p. 144), means commission or authorization together with the idea of benediction, and it is so intended in this Service.

(*e*) The work of the Deacon is particularized as follows—

- (1) To assist the senior clergyman in the Services.
- (2) To read the Scripture and Homilies in Church.
- (3) To instruct the youth.
- (4) To administer Baptism if required.
- (5) To preach if licensed.
- (6) To search for the sick, poor, and weak, and to notify their needs to the clergy of the parish.

## 2. The Ordering of Priests.

(*a*) The word "Priest" is equivalent to Presbyter or Elder. This is its invariable meaning in the Prayer Book, following closely New Testament usage. The English word "Priest," as we have already seen, has to do duty for two very different offices—(1) The Jewish Sacrificing Priest. (2) The Christian Presbyter or Elder. The Prayer Book use of the term is always the equivalent of the latter idea. We read first of Presbyters or Elders in Acts xi, but no record is given in the New Testament of their appointment in the Christian Church. The word was already associated with the Jewish Synagogue indicative of one of their officers, and it was a natural use of the term to apply it to the corresponding minister of the New Covenant. Possibly it indicates age, or seniority of experience. This position of great authority rightly accounts for certain essential differences in the ordination of priests as compared with that of deacons.

(*b*) The long Exhortation delivered by the Bishop previous to the questions being put is a striking feature of this Service. It contains a truly remarkable picture of pastoral life and work. It is scarcely possible to imagine or describe anything more solemnly beautiful than this account of a true minister of God.

(*c*) The questions, which are eight in number, differ slightly here and there from those in the Ordination of Deacons; the greater fullness and solemnity befit the higher Office.

(*d*) The call to silent prayer is unique, for it is found in no other place in the Prayer Book. It is a significant feature on such an occasion, silently testifying to the union of pastor and people in life and work.

(*e*) The hymn, "Veni, Creator," used in this Service, is found at

Ordinations since the eleventh century, though the hymn is of much earlier date as used generally in the Christian Church.

(f) The Ordination itself differs from that of Deacons in associating the Presbyters present with the Bishop in the act of laying on of hands. This is in strict accordance with St. Paul's teaching in 1 Tim. iv. 14. Those who have witnessed an Ordination Service will not soon forget the solemn sight of the Bishop and Presbyters surrounding the candidate for the Priesthood.

(g) The words accompanying the Ordination are from St. John xx. 22, 23.

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

They are a special and personal application to the one individual of the general and universal commission given by our Lord to the whole Church to preach the Gospel, and to declare God's message of remission or forgiveness. The Presbyter is thus God's Prophet, possessing Divine commission to proclaim the Gospel, and also to announce to men the solemn alternatives if God's message is rejected. It is very striking that this Formula of Ordination, although not found in use before the twelfth century, was nevertheless deliberately retained by Archbishop Cranmer in our Service because of its close and strict adherence to the Word of God as part of the great commission of Evangelization given by our Lord to His Church.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Consecration of Bishops.

(a) The difference between this Form and that for Priests seems to be rather a difference of degree than of kind, with the one exception that to the Bishop alone is given the power of Ordination. Apart from this fact there is very little essential difference between the two Services, and this seems to point to our retention of the primitive idea of Episcopacy as having originally arisen out of the Order of the Presbyterate. The Presbyters, who in the New Testament are also called Bishops or Overseers (Acts xx. 17, 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1) originally appointed one of their number to act as Elder or President, to whom the title of Bishop gradually became applied and limited. Out of this simple arrangement came the present distinct Orders of Priest and Bishop which, as our Services indicate, still retain marks of the primitive idea as to the relation of the one Order to the other.

<sup>1</sup> For a full treatment of this most important and truly Scriptural part of our Ordination Service, see Drury, *Confession and Absolution*, p. 247 ff.

(b) The questions are similar in character to those already considered, referring to the personal call, personal character, and personal work.

(c) The words of Consecration follow St. Paul's counsels and charge to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 6, 7).

From the foregoing considerations and a very careful study of the Ordinal as a whole, we readily see that the work of the Ministry is almost entirely pastoral, following our Lord's commission to St. Peter (John xxi. 15-17). The Ministry of reconciliation is, of course, an integral and necessary part of this pastoral work. The minister in pronouncing the Absolution does not convey the actual gift of forgiveness, but conveys to the penitent and believing soul the assurance of the fact of forgiveness to those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Word. The following aspects of pastoral work will be found included in the Prayer Book and Ordination Services—

(1) The pastoral work of instruction by means of sermons, reading, and catechising.

(2) The pastoral work of visiting ; “ to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish ” (Ordering of Deacons), and “ to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world ” (Ordering of Priests).

(3) The pastoral work of consolation. This includes the ministry to the sorrowing, the troubled, the sick, and the dying.

Ministers are thus “ Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord,” and are indeed called to ‘ have always printed in their remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to their charge.’ ”

In the course of the Ordination Service it is apparently assumed that as a rule the minister will be a married man, for much point is made of the minister fashioning himself and his household in order that they may be examples to the flock of Christ. This is in exact accordance with Article XXXII, which permits marriage to all Orders of the Ministry, if “ they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.” A married ministry, at any rate in the case of Priests who are in charge of a Parish, tends to emphasize the essential oneness of life and interest between pastor and people, and cannot help tending to deepen sympathy as well as experience on the part of the minister as to the needs and life of the young and old of his flock. The bond between pastor and people is also shown in the part taken in the Ordination Services by the people, and when this tie between shepherd and flock is realized as the ideal set before us by the Word of God and our Church, then indeed will God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and the Church of God

will be gradually built up in order to become the Holy Temple which, in the future, is to appear to the praise and glory of God. The Ministry is at once a ministry of Christ (Col. i. 7) ; a ministry of the Gospel (Col. i. 23) ; and a ministry of the Church (Col. i. 24, 25).

From all the above considerations we can readily see the duty of the Christian congregation to the Ministry of the Church.

(a) We should value the ministry. It is God's gift ; let us recognize and welcome it. Let us listen to and learn from it. Let us know and esteem it (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). Let us obey and submit to it in the Lord (Heb. xiii. 17 ; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3).

(b) We should pray for the ministry. Union in prayer brings blessing to pastor and people. A well-known minister gave as the secret of blessing on his work, " My people pray for me." The frequent use of the second Ember Collect and the Collects in the Ordinal may be suggested for this purpose.

(c) We should co-operate with the ministry. There should be union in service between minister and people. Thus will blessing deepen and be extended, " till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ " (Eph. iv. 13).

## CHAPTER XIV

### CHURCH DOCTRINE

It is recorded of the converts on the Day of Pentecost that they " continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine " (Acts ii. 42), and all through the New Testament we find great stress laid on truth, or doctrine, as essential to Christian life, work, and progress. In the Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus his counsels are very prominent about " sound doctrine," i.e. healthful teaching, teaching that ministers to moral and spiritual health (1 Tim. i. 3, 10 ; iv. 1, 6, 16 ; v. 20 ; vi. 1, 3, 5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 15-17 ; iii. 7, 10, 14-17 ; iv. 2, 3, 4 ; Titus i. 1, 9, 13 ; ii. 7). In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are warned against being carried about with " divers and strange doctrines " (xiii. 9). and St. John solemnly tells us that he that " abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God " (2 John 9).

In like manner, and closely following the Apostolic instructions, the Church of England from first to last puts the greatest possible emphasis on teaching and instruction. We have already seen this generally in the provision for the reading of the Bible, in the Lessons,



in the numerous instructions and exhortations in the various Services, in the insistence upon the Creeds as the summary of the actual Faith. Even more clearly we can see it in the prominence given to the Articles at the time when our Prayer Book was compiled. The question of Christian doctrine must, therefore, have our earnest attention.

**1. The Source of Doctrine.**—Holy Scripture is the primal fount of Christian teaching. St. Paul says of the Old Testament, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. iii. 16). Much more is this true of the full New Testament revelation. Our Church is very insistent on this in Article VI, and in numerous other Articles Holy Scripture is referred to as the ultimate and final source of religious authority. This is the fundamental principle of our Church laid down at the Reformation and illustrated for us, beginning at Cranmer's Preface, right through the Prayer Book.

**2. The Standard of Doctrine.**—For the Church of England this is found in the Prayer Book and Articles. Our Church provides them as our guides to Christian doctrine and offers to us their statements of truth as landmarks interpretative of Holy Scripture. The standard of doctrine comes before us in five different ways.

(a) The Apostles' Creed. From "most certain warrants of Holy Scripture" this simplest and most elementary Creed brings before us the salient facts of God's revelation in Christ. This is the basis of all Church instruction.

(b) The Nicene Creed. At the Holy Communion, suited to the riper experience of communicants, we have this Creed as a deeper, fuller, and more theological statement of the facts and meaning of Divine revelation.

(c) The Athanasian Creed. This, as we have seen, is an elaborate statement of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the two pillars of the Christian Faith.

(d) The Thirty-Nine Articles. These afford a still more detailed and exact theological statement of the doctrinal basis of the Church with special reference to her own position and attitude. To these Articles we must give special attention in order to understand fully what Church doctrine is on the subjects treated within their limits.

(e) The Homilies. These are two books of Sermons put forth at the time of the Reformation because of prevailing ignorance and the need of popular instruction on various aspects of the Christian Faith. They are described in Article XXXV as containing "a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times." Although their phraseology has now an air of remoteness, their doctrine is clear and unmistakable, and Canon 80, which is still

binding on the clergy, orders that a copy of the Homilies shall be provided for every Parish Church. We have another testimony to the value set on the Homilies at the Reformation in the statement of Article XI, which reads, "Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification." The indirect general authority of these Homilies for the Doctrine of the Church of England is undoubtedly clear and definite, and very often they will be found extremely valuable for the purpose of interpreting particular parts of the Prayer Book and Articles. It is, however, to the Articles themselves that we must now turn our particular attention as giving to us the direct, and, so far complete, statement of characteristic English Church doctrine.

3. **The Significance of the Articles.**—The Thirty-nine Articles have a twofold value and importance.

(a) In relation to their historical origin. They form part of the Reformation statement of Christian truth. Definition was necessary on the part of all those who were compelled to differ from the prevailing views and practices of the Church of Rome. The consequence was that all the Reformed Communions stated their position in the form of Articles or Confessions of Faith. Our Articles are therefore analogous to the documents of the Continental Reformed Churches, and not only analogous to them, but clearly influenced by them, especially by certain Lutheran formularies like the Confession of Augsburg (1530), and the Confession of Wurtemberg (1552).<sup>1</sup> The Articles are thus never to be separated from their historical root in relation to the Church of Rome, for they mark the historical and doctrinal position of the Church of England. It is a well-known fact that they were drawn up in full view of the Council of Trent, the Canons of which were public property at that time. They are important to-day for the same reason, still marking our continued position and teaching.

Into the history of the details of our Articles it is unnecessary to enter in the present work. Full particulars can easily be obtained in Bishop Barry's *Teacher's Prayer Book*, and other similar handbooks.

(b) In relation to Christian doctrine. The Articles are of supreme value as giving us the standard of characteristic Church of England doctrine, and to them we refer all who wish to know what the Church really teaches on subjects (1) identical with those of other Churches—Articles I–V; and (2) characteristic of her own position—Articles VI–XXXIX. If, moreover, there should be any question

<sup>1</sup> It is also significant that the general structure of the Articles bears much resemblance to that of Calvin's *Institutes*.—G. W. B.

as to the meaning of the Prayer Book on matters of doctrine, the Prayer Book is to be judged by the Articles rather than the Articles by the Prayer Book. The language of the Prayer Book is that of devotion ; the language of the Articles that of doctrine, and for exactness, balance, and fullness we naturally look to the latter rather than to the former. It is necessary to call attention to this obvious truth, though we believe that there is no likelihood of any one finding a discrepancy between the Prayer Book and the Articles on points of essential doctrine. They were all compiled or drawn up by the same men, and convey their own uniform, clear message of Christian truth.

4. **The Outline of the Articles.**—The following analysis may help to suggest the course and completeness of the treatment of the doctrine provided in the Articles.

A. The Substance of Faith. Articles I–V.

1. Article I. The Holy Trinity.
2. Articles II, III, IV. The Son of God.
3. Article V. The Holy Spirit.

B. The Rule of Faith. Articles VI–VIII.

1. Article VI. The Holy Scriptures.
2. Article VII. The Old Testament.
3. Article VIII. The Creeds.

C. The Life of Faith. Articles IX–XVIII. Doctrines of Personal Religion.

1. Articles IX–XIV. Doctrines connected with Justification (commencement of Christian life).
2. Articles XV–XVIII. Doctrines connected with Sanctification (course of the Christian life).

D. The Household of Faith. Articles XIX–XXXIX. Doctrines of corporate religion.

1. Articles XIX–XXIV. The Church and the Ministry.
2. Articles XXV–XXXI. The Sacraments.
3. Articles XXXII–XXXVI. Church Discipline.
4. Articles XXXVII–XXXIX. Church and State.

5. **The Importance of Christian Doctrine.**—The doctrine enshrined in Scripture and elaborated in our Prayer Book and Articles, has a fourfold claim upon our lives.

(a) It claims our study. Christian Doctrine expresses the intellectual position involved in being a believer. It gives the explicit intellectual side of what is spiritually implicit from the outset of the believer's life. When Christ is accepted as Saviour, Lord and God, everything else is really involved, and is already possessed as a germinal principle. We commence by faith, and then go on towards knowledge. We must inevitably think out our spiritual

position, and what is involved in our relation to our Lord. The possession of an intellectual grip and grasp of Christianity is necessary for a strong, vigorous, useful Christian life. It will give balance, fibre and protection to our spiritual experience. It will enable us to bear our testimony against error, and at the same time protect us against error ourselves. It will, moreover, enable us to render service to others, especially when asked for a reason of the hope that is in us. It is possible to live too much in emotional experiences apart from much intellectual clearness and power. This, however, is not to be truly spiritual, but tends towards a false spirituality, and to weakness and poverty to life. At the same time, we must be careful to preserve the balance, and ever to remember that Christian theology is not a mere matter of intellectual perception, but of spiritual experience as well. *Pectus theologum facit*, "It is the heart that makes the theologian." Theology is not only concerned with words but with spiritual realities, and no one is a theologian who has not experienced the power of these realities.

(b) It claims our obedience. St. Paul pictures the Christians of Rome as having been cast into a mould of doctrine (Rom. vi. 17 R.V., and Greek), and being shaped by it. Doctrine always shapes life, and "the Faith once delivered to the saints" will, if yielded to, influence, permeate, and transform the whole of our inner and outer life. There is no doctrine in the whole Christian revelation that is intended merely for speculation. Everything has a practical bearing, and is meant in some way or other to be expressed in character and conduct.

(c) It claims our faithful adherence. St. Paul was always concerned for the steadfast consistency and constant faithfulness of the Christians of his day. He is never tired of insisting upon the highest standard of Christian living, and warns us against continuing to be mere children in spiritual experience. "Tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 14). Imperfect knowledge of Christian truth and imperfect loyalty thereto will always result in wavering of faith and inconsistency of life; while, on the other hand, when we are strengthened and established in the faith we shall always be kept safe from error of doctrine and practice.

(d) It claims our life. We are called upon to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus ii. 10), to recommend it as a beautiful garment, and our words are ever to be "things which become sound doctrine" (Titus ii. 1). We are to hold forth the truth in the "beauty of holiness," for truth when expressed in life is the most beautiful reality in the world. The Lord Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth, and when the truth of God possesses



our life we shall show forth His glory in the garment of praise, and in a life which will recommend the Master and His glorious Gospel.

## CHAPTER XV

### *THE RIGHT USE OF THE PRAYER BOOK*

WE have now considered the main outline of the Church's provision for our worship and life, our character and service, and it is necessary to call renewed attention to the way in which the Prayer Book and Articles should be used if we would value them aright and derive all the blessing they are intended and calculated to convey. Pages of quotations could be given showing the value set on the Prayer Book by very many eminent Christians of our own and other communions,<sup>1</sup> but after all the real test is that of personal experience. What the Prayer Book is to us, what it is doing for our life, is the only satisfying proof of its spiritual value.

#### **1. Its Twofold Purpose.**

(a) First and foremost the Prayer Book is a handbook of public worship. It provides forms for the expression of our corporate Christianity. In order to understand fully the purpose and principles which actuated the compilers of the Prayer Book in providing this handbook, we should read the very interesting preface by Archbishop Cranmer, which now occupies the second place in the introductory part of the Prayer Book, and is entitled, "Concerning the Services of the Church." The aim and methods of the Reformers can readily be seen from this valuable statement. They desired the people to have the Word of God in their mother tongue, and to have a handbook of worship purified from everything unscriptural, simple in form, suited to general use, and one that could be used in every part of the Church and land. This original purpose was continued in the seventeenth century in the revision of 1662, as we can see from the Preface, composed by Bishop Sanderson, and the result is now before us in our Prayer Book and Articles, which have been accepted and appreciated by over three centuries of "sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England."

<sup>1</sup> Two testimonies, although often quoted, will well bear repetition. John Wesley said, "I know of no liturgy in the world, ancient or modern, which breathes more of solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England." Robert Hall, the well-known Baptist minister, wrote: "The Evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastened fervour of its devotion, and the majestic simplicity of its language, combine to place it in the very first rank of uninspired compositions."

(b) But the Prayer Book necessarily affords at the same time a plan and rule of daily living. It gives a standard of life, and shows what, in the mind of the Church of England, the Christian is intended to be, while at the same time it enables him to realize this purpose. It introduces us, first of all, into covenant relationship with God, then provides nourishment for our life, instruction in Christian truth, opportunity for worship and service, and meets us at each step of the journey of life until the end. The Baptismal Services are full of instruction as to the Christian life and as to the community into which we have entered. We are reminded of our duty "to follow our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him," and this the Prayer Book enables us to do by means of its instruction and devotion, its Feasts and Fasts, its Catechism and Confirmation, its Holy Communion and Daily Worship, as well as its help for the various occasions of life. If only the Prayer Book is used in this way, it will soon have its effect on character and conduct. We have but to yield ourselves to its guidance and we shall rejoice in its protection and liberty, its sobriety and joy, its power and inspiration for holiness, worship, and service to God and man.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Its Remarkable Characteristics.

(c) The fullness and variety of the Prayer Book. There is something for almost every conceivable circumstance and occasion of the Christian life common to our corporate relationship. From the beginning to the end it provides just what we need, in Baptism, Catechism, Confirmation, The Holy Communion, Marriage, Churching, Sickness, and Death. Personal, social, and national events are all included.

(b) Its unity and definiteness. The one supreme purpose of the Prayer Book is to bring us face to face with God. He is the Centre and Object of all our worship. Man is nothing, God is all.

(c) Its balance and proportion. The claims of the individual are fully emphasized, and yet the relations of the individual to the Church and the Church to the individual are equally brought before us. The complementary aspects of personal and corporate Christian life are thus adequately and proportionately emphasized. Its balance is also seen in the way in which its treasures of worship are drawn from antiquity as well as from more recent days, and in the combination of the ancient Creeds with modern Articles of Doctrine. And again in relation to Christian experience, its proper insistence on joy and yet on watchfulness, on privilege and yet on duty, should be carefully noted.

<sup>1</sup> On this point see Tiffany, *The Prayer Book and the Christian Life*, and an Article on it in *The Church Quarterly Review*, vol. xlix, p. 297, which, apart from certain errors, is well worthy of study.

3. **Its Necessary Limitations.**—While all that we have said, and much more besides, is true of our precious heritage, we may not fail to remember that the Prayer Book and Articles are human and fallible, and therefore subject to limitations. The Prayer Book is to be our servant, not our master ; not every phrase in it is necessarily to be accepted as though it were equivalent to the infallible Word of God, though it is truly wonderful how little there is in the whole of our formularies to which any real exception can be taken. Nor is each expression necessarily appropriate for universal use at all times. It is not to be expected that whenever we use the Prayer Book all who are present can realize every statement of the particular Form used, though any difficulty here may well be due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of some of its phrases. Common worship makes a general appeal to those fundamental needs of the greatest possible number, and we must remember that however inappropriate to our experience at any given time certain words may be, they may be the very wings of devotion to our neighbour worshipping next to us.

There will doubtless come a time when, like our sister Churches in Ireland and America, we shall be able to enrich our Prayer Book with further forms of devotion, but in the meantime due use of what we have cannot fail to bless and uplift the life.

It should never be forgotten that what the New Testament calls the "spirit of liberty" is untouched by the use of the Prayer Book. That Book is mainly for common worship and for the purpose of expressing corporate needs. Our own private individual needs are necessarily largely left outside this provision, and for these we can voice our hearty desires as led by the Spirit Who lives within us to make intercession.

The value of Forms of Prayer for public worship is evident to all. They prevent the congregation from being dependent upon the spiritual experience of the clergyman at any given moment, while at the same time they enable us to express our corporate needs in language that, judging from general experience, is rarely met with from individual ministers of God.

It is sometimes said that set forms of prayers tend to formality, but the same danger is associated with extemporary prayers offered by a minister and followed in silence by the congregation. For his extemporary prayers are as much a form to his people as if he used a book, and in the latter case the people have the advantage of knowing beforehand what the petitions will be. To be entirely dependent on one man leading prayers without being able to take our personal part in them is hardly "common" worship in the true sense. The use of a liturgy makes the worship truly "Congrega-

tional." In the Church of the second century we find traces of both extemporaneous prayer and forms of prayer, and doubtless the ideal arrangement is a blending of the two methods. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that our praise, whether in psalms or hymns, must of necessity be expressed in forms. Those who object to forms of prayer do not object to the use of the Psalms of David, metrical versions of the Psalms, and hymns written by Christian poets and hymn writers. Yet prayer and praise are on a level as elements of worship. This only goes to show that the key to the whole position is not the presence or absence of any set form of words whether for praise or prayer, but the spirit we put into the words we use and presumably make our own.

The question of extemporary prayer in our public Services after the legal requirements have been fulfilled is a matter of some difference of opinion, but when it is remembered how few apparently have the gift of leading prayers in public *ex tempore*, we may well be grateful for what we have, and thank God for the glorious opportunity of lifting up heart and mind to Him in words which have been hallowed by the almost countless worshippers of many centuries.





PART III  
THE CATHOLIC FAITH AND  
CURRENT QUESTIONS



## CURRENT QUESTIONS

### *INTRODUCTION*

HITHERTO we have been occupied with the subject of the Christian life in the Church of England, what it is, and what it involves. The positive teaching of our Church shows clearly what Churchmanship means, and what is the teaching of the Church of England on the vital themes of Christianity. We cannot forget, however, that membership in the Church of England involves and requires an attitude towards other views and organizations claiming Christian names. There are conflicting and even opposing ideas current in Christian circles, and it is necessary to show how the Church stands in relation to these movements outside her pale. It is, of course, impossible in our space to deal with all the varied and varying currents of thought and life, but an attempt must be made to show what is implied in membership in the English Church in relation, and it may be in opposition, to other tendencies of modern thought. The Churchman who has a clear, strong grasp of his own position ought to be and will be able to explain and justify it. Amid the many surrounding forces of the present day he will not only be able to say why he is a Churchman, but also why, because he is a Churchman, he is not anything else.



## CHAPTER I

### *AUTHORITY IN RELIGION*

At the foundation of all questions of religion lies the great subject of Authority. "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" (Matt. xxi. 23). All matters of difference between Christian people resolve themselves at last in this question of Authority, and if only we could come to an agreement on the supreme and final authority of the Christian religion, it would not be difficult to settle our differences and solve our problems. It is essential, therefore, that we as Churchmen should be quite clear on the important subject of the final and supreme authority in the Christian religion.

1. **The Need of Authority.**—Man, even as man, needs a guide, an authoritative guide in things spiritual, some guide above, outside, greater than himself; a guide supernatural, superhuman, Divine.

Still more, man as a sinner needs an authoritative guide. Amid the sins and sorrows, the fears and difficulties, the trials and problems of life man needs an authoritative guide concerning the way of salvation, holiness, eternal life and glory. Looking away from himself, and from his fellows who are in the same position, man seeks and longs for assurance on these great matters. There is one cry welling up from the heart of every man who is concerned about the meaning of life: "What is Truth? Where can it be found?" Man assuredly needs an authority in matters of religion. This leads us to consider—

2. **The Source of Authority.**—Where can this necessary authority be found? It is found in the Revelation of God to the world, in His presence here and His action on man. Divine Revelation is thus the only Source and Basis of Authority. God has not left the world to itself. He who made the world and still upholds and overrules all things by His Providence, has also revealed Himself to man in things spiritual, and this Revelation is the foundation of man's life.

God's revelation is a personal one, personal both in source and destination. It is the revelation of a Person to a person, the Person of God in Christ to the person of man. This personal revelation is intended to affect with transforming influence every part of our natural and earthly life.

But here comes the important question, Where is this personal

Revelation embodied? How may it become available for me? Since God is invisible, how may the personal Revelation of God influence my life? This leads to our third topic—

3. **The Seat of Authority.**—Is God's Revelation discoverable by us? If God has revealed Himself to man in Christ, it ought to be possible to find and use this revelation. There are, perhaps, only three possible answers to the question, Where is the Seat of Authority in Religion?

(a) Some say it is embodied in Human Reason. Reason is very valuable and necessary as one of the means of testing the claims of Authority and as the recipient of the truth of revelation. But can it be itself the seat of authority? It is, after all, only one of several human faculties, and Revelation concerns them all. Still more, reason has been affected by sin, and has become biassed, darkened and often distorted. It surely would not be reliable as the seat of authority in religion.

(b) Others say the Church is the seat of authority. We ask at once, What Church? Where is it to be found? The Church of England does not claim it for herself or allow it of any other Church. The Greek Church does not claim it. The Protestant Churches of Europe and America do not claim it. The Church of Rome alone claims to be the seat and embodiment of authority, but her claims are easily disproved when subjected to the two tests of historic fact and personal experience. Her career in history is far too dark and chequered to permit of her being regarded as the Seat of Divine Authority. And, on the other hand, her influence on human life, liberty, and progress is one of the strongest disproofs of her claim.

Besides, the Church of Christ, in the fullest and truest meaning of the term, "the blessed company of all faithful people," is itself the product of Divine Revelation. The Church came into existence on the Day of Pentecost by accepting God's Word as preached by St. Peter. Since the Church is thus the result, the product of Divine revelation, and all subsequent additions to the Church are instances of the same great principle, the Church cannot itself be the seat of the Authority. The Church cannot embody its Creator.

(c) The only other answer to the question before us is that given by the Church of England. The seat of Authority is to be found in the Word of God as recorded in the Bible. The Bible is for us the seat and embodiment of Divine Revelation in Christ.

What are our reasons for this position?

(a) The Scriptures preserve for us the revelation of Christ in its purest form. Christianity has a historic basis in the Person of Christ, and what we need is the clearest form of that revelation. The books of the New Testament, being the product of the Apostolic

age, give us the purest form of revelation and guarantee it. At a later date this would have been impossible, because there was no unique inspiration after the days of the Apostles, and because, moreover, oral transmission is not trustworthy. What we ask is that the vehicle of transmission shall be certain and assuring. It matters not whether the vehicle is a book, or a man, or an institution, so long as we can be sure of its faithfulness as conveying God's revelation. We cannot be sure of this in human reason or in any ecclesiastical institution. But we are sure of it in the books of the New Testament because—

(b) The New Testament came to us from Apostolic men, men who were authorized to be the exponents of the Divine will. We accept the books, not merely as old, or as helpful, nor even as true, but because with these, and beneath these, they come from men who were uniquely qualified to reveal God's will to man.

And when we have made this position of the Church of England clear, we proceed to consider—

**4. The Nature of this Authority.**—It is a spiritual authority. Article VI, that sheet-anchor of our Church,<sup>1</sup> says, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." The Bible is not a handbook of literature, though it is full of literature. It is not a guide to science, though it is full of scientific facts. It is not a record of history, though it is full of historical matter. It is a spiritual authority, a guide to man's life in things moral and spiritual. It declares the way of Salvation.

**5. The Scope of this Authority.**—It is our supreme Authority.

(1) The Bible as the ultimate and final voice in religion is supreme over reason. Reason is human, but Scripture, though human in form, has Divine elements guaranteed by inspiration. Scripture is the light of reason, the informant of the mind, and the guide of all religious thought.

(2) The Bible is supreme over the Church in the same way. The Holy Scriptures are the title deeds of the Church, the law of the Church's life, the test of its purity, the source of its strength, the spring of its progress.

But it may be said, How can this be when the Church existed twenty-five years before a line of the New Testament was written? This is historically true, but what is the question intended to convey? Are we to argue from it the supremacy of the Church

<sup>1</sup> "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."

over the Bible? Let us examine the argument. It is assumed by this that the Church had no Bible in the Apostolic age, and that the Bible came historically after the Church and was given and authorized by the Church. In the first place, the Church *had* a Bible from the very outset, the Old Testament Scriptures, and such was their power that St. Paul could say that with the single but significant addition of "faith in Christ Jesus" these Old Testament Scriptures were "able to make wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15).

But leaving this aside, the argument contains a fallacy which needs to be exposed. It is perfectly true that the Church existed before the *written* Word of the New Testament, but we must remember that there was first of all the *spoken* word of God through inspired Apostles. On the Day of Pentecost the word of God was *spoken*, the revelation of God in Christ was proclaimed, and on the acceptance of that Word the Church came into existence. The Word was proclaimed and accepted and the Church was thus formed on the Word of God. And as long as the Apostles were at hand the spoken Word sufficed; but as time went on and the Apostles travelled, and afterwards died, there sprang up the need for a permanent embodiment of the Revelation, and this was gradually given in the written Word. From that time forward, in all ages, the written Word has been the equivalent of the original spoken Word. The Church was created by the Word of God received through faith. The Word created the Church, not the Church the Word.

"In the history of the world the unwritten Word of God must of course be before the Church. For what is a Church (in the wider sense of the word) but a group of believers in God's Word? And before the Word is spoken, how can there be believers in it? 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' Therefore the Word of God must be *before* faith. It is only of the Bible, or written volume of God's oracles, assuredly *not* of God's spoken Word, that we assert it to have been brought into existence later than the Church." <sup>1</sup>

The original process is illustrated constantly in the modern Mission Field. There was, for example, a Church in Uganda through the spoken Word long before the written Word could be given to them. But now the written Word is at once the foundation and guarantee of that Church's continued existence and progress.

The Apostles may be regarded as representatives of Christ or as members of the Church. It is in the former aspect that they conveyed first the spoken and then the written Word of God, which has ever been the source of all Christian life.

The function of a Rule of Faith is the conveyance of the Divine Authority to men. The Bible as a rule of faith existed in the minds

<sup>1</sup> Goulburn's *Holy Catholic Church*, p. 244.



of Christ and the Apostles long before it existed as a written work. Accordingly it precedes and conditions the existence and organization of the Church. The Church is to the Word a witness and a keeper (Article XX). The Church bears testimony to what Scripture is, and at the same time preserves Scripture among Christian people from age to age. But though the Church is a witness and a keeper, she is not the maker of Scripture.

The function of the Christian Church as the "witness and keeper of Holy Writ" is exactly parallel to that of the Jewish Church in relation to the Old Testament. The prophets who were raised up from time to time as the messengers and mouthpieces of Divine Revelation delivered their writings of the Old Testament to the Jews, who thereupon preserved them, and thenceforward bore their constant testimony to the reality and authority of the Divine Revelation embodied in the books.

The Church of Christ, whether regarded in her corporate capacity or in connexion with individual members, is not the author of Holy Scripture. The Church, as we have seen, received the Scriptures from the Lord Jesus Christ through His Apostles and Prophets, and now the function of the Church is to witness to the fact that these are the Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets which she has received and of which she is also the keeper, their preserver through the ages for use by the people of God. Article XX is perfectly clear as to the relation of the Bible and the Church.

We must hold fast to this position, for there is no more specious fallacy in existence than that just considered, and none doing greater harm to those who do not think out their own position.

(3) The Bible is supreme over Church Tradition. The Church of Rome puts Church tradition, i.e. Church customs, usages, beliefs, on a level with Scripture as a rule of faith. But the Church of England, while valuing such testimony in its proper place, refuses to co-ordinate the two, and puts the Bible high above all else as our Authority in things essential.

Article XX tells us that the Church has "power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith." The word "power" (Latin, *jus*) implies full legal right to appoint and order any ceremonies or methods of worship that may be regarded as fitting and appropriate, so long as nothing is ordained contrary to Holy Scripture. In Controversies of Faith, however, it is to be noticed that the Church has not this full legal right, but "authority" (Latin, *auctoritas*), which means moral authority arising out of the testimony of the Church as a whole throughout the ages. The ultimate court of appeal must of necessity be the spiritually enlightened judgment of the individual Christian with reference to any

and every matter of truth and conscience. This is the inalienable right of the individual, whether like the Churchman he exercises it continually and directly from the Bible, or whether like the Roman Catholic he exercises it once for all in deciding to submit himself to an external organization which he believes to be an infallible guide. But the individual judgment of a believer must continually be checked and safeguarded by the continuous consensus of Christian opinion and practice, and it is part of our Christian discipline to combine properly the spiritual right of the individual believer and the moral authority of the Christian community. For all practical purposes very little difficulty will be found in this connexion.

(a) This position of the supreme authority of the Bible over Tradition is the assertion of the historic basis of Christianity. There is of course a true Church life and growth, but it must be growth and development from Apostolic germs. Many of the characteristic positions of the Church of Rome are not true developments from Apostolic germs, but alien growths from other germs of later date than the Apostolic age. This is quite another thing from legitimate development, and its tendency is to destroy the original germs and to transform true Christianity into the admixture of truth and error found in the Church of Rome. Adherence to the Bible and the constant shaping of Church customs and usages thereby will safeguard us against any such departure from the truth of God.

(b) This position is the charter of spiritual freedom. Tradition is vague and arbitrary, and means the acceptance of the *dicta* of fallible men. Besides, Church tradition must be embodied somewhere. Some say it is in the Pope. Others say in a General Council. Others say in the Pope and Council combined, and these differences show the utter impossibility of arriving at a true conclusion. The great authority of the first four General Councils is acknowledged by all, and their doctrinal standards are our heritage to-day. Yet even their decisions were accepted because they immediately and readily commended themselves to the judgment of the whole Church as in accordance with Divine revelation. This, too, is the principle on which the Church of England accepts the authority of General Councils (see Article XXI).

General Councils, however, have expressed themselves on a few matters only, and do not offer any help on the many pressing problems of life as to which the soul needs guidance and authority. Consequently, the final decision *must* be made by the spiritually illuminated Christian consciousness guided by the Word of God and advised by means of every possible channel of knowledge available. When this is clearly realized it removes all objections to what is often scornfully described as "private judgment." It is this, but

it is very much more. Private judgment does not mean private fancy, but a deliberate decision based on Scripture. It is the decision of the judgment, the conscience, and the will of the man who desires to know and follow the truth, and who finds the source and embodiment of truth in the Scripture, and bows in submission to it. He does not separate himself from or set himself above the corporate Christian consciousness of his own and previous ages, so far as he can determine what that corporate consciousness teaches, but while welcoming and weighing truth from all sides, he feels that Scripture is the supreme and final authority for his life.

This position is abundantly justified on several grounds. It comes to us with the example of our Lord Who constantly appealed to the Scriptures as the touchstone of truth. It is that which is the most consonant with the nature of our personality and its responsibility to God. It is the assertion of our indefeasible right to be in direct personal relation to God, while welcoming all possible light from every available quarter as helping us to decide for ourselves under the guidance of God's Word and Spirit. This position has also ever been productive of the finest characters, and the noblest and truest examples of individual and corporate Christian life. We have only to compare such countries as South America and Spain, where the opposite principle of Church authority and supremacy has had undisputed sway for centuries, to see the truth of this statement.

Once again let it be said that we do wisely and well in giving to the universal voice and testimony of the Church (wherever and in so far as it can be discovered) the utmost possible weight, for no individual will lightly set aside such united and universal belief; but the last and final authority must be the Word of God illuminating, influencing, and controlling the human conscience and reason through the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

**6. The Sufficiency of this Authority.**—The Bible is our sufficient authority.

(a) It is sufficient because it is full. There is nothing required for the spiritual life of all men at all times and in all places which is not found there.

(b) It is sufficient because it is clear. When all is said about its obscurity in certain parts, the fact remains that there is still left more than enough to guide every honest soul from time to eternity.

(c) It is sufficient because it is definite. There is no doubt about its meaning. It says what it means and means what it says. What must I do to be saved? How may I be holy? How can I live aright? How shall I live hereafter? To every necessary question the Bible has a definite and unmistakable answer.

(d) It is sufficient because it is accessible. Here is a little book,

easily obtained, quickly read, and adequate to every conceivable circumstance.

(e) It is sufficient because it is satisfying. To the soul that receives it, it affords its own blessed and satisfying proofs. That soul needs nothing that is not derived thence for spiritual life and power.

This great truth of the sufficiency of Holy Scripture may be summed up in the words of the Apostle Paul, who, speaking of the Old Testament (though the words are still truer of the New Testament books), says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (*lit.* God-breathed), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16 f.). The Divine inspiration carries the Divine authority, and with it the profitableness of the Scriptures. And the profitableness is of so full, varied, and thorough a nature that the man of God finds in it, as we have seen above, a complete equipment for his whole life.

We say, therefore, that the Bible is sufficient as a spiritual authority, that it is neither insufficient nor obscure, and that it is not necessary to go to the early Church to clear it of obscurity or supplement its inadequacy. It is not to be supplanted by Church or Council, or Pope, and not to be supplemented by tradition, whether primitive or current.

This is the Church of England position on the question of authority in Religion: the Scriptures, supreme and sufficient. Taking our stand on Article VI, we ask concerning everything offered to us as vital and essential, What saith the Scriptures? We test everything by Scripture. To this end we must study it. We must "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Scriptures if we would be on our guard against attack, or attack error ourselves. There is no Churchmanship worthy the name which is not based on a personal, experimental, intellectual, practical knowledge of the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

IN view of the insistence on the supremacy of Scripture which we find so clearly brought before us in the Articles, it is necessary to inquire on what precise grounds our Church accepts Holy Scripture as the Supreme Authority.



1. **The Canon of Scripture.**—Article VI tells us that “a Canonical Book,”<sup>1</sup> that is, a book regarded as part of the Word of God, is one “of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.” This statement cannot apply strictly and literally to all the books of the New Testament, and the Reformers well knew of the early doubts which attached for a time to some books. It is probable that as the doubts were entirely dead by the sixteenth century the reference is to the Church as a whole as distinct from individual Churches. The acceptance of the books of the New Testament was originally settled mainly by the public reading and use of the various books in the services and life of the Christian congregations. The first three centuries of the Christian Church never pronounced as a whole on the books of the New Testament except by the testimony of individual writers. No corporate testimony was either possible or necessary, but when the call for this came there was no doubt about our present books. The Council of Carthage, 397, first bore witness to the existing beliefs of the Churches represented there as to the books acknowledged as the New Testament. Neither this nor any Council *decided* the question by enactment. They only witnessed to what the Churches already believed on the matter.

That the Churches gave their careful attention to the subject is evident from the fact that there were certain exclusions as well as inclusions in regard to both parts of Scripture. The Old Testament Apocryphal Books were never included in the Old Testament by the Jews, were never quoted by our Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament, and the distinction between them and the Old Testament was clearly understood by those who knew Hebrew. And the early Christians, while valuing certain books, like the Epistle of Clement of Rome, deliberately avoided accepting them as part of the New Testament Scriptures.

As we have already seen, the fundamental reason for accepting certain books as the Word of God of the New Covenant, was the conviction in the early Church that these books came from men who were uniquely inspired to reveal the will of God, commissioned by our Lord, and authorized to be the exponents of His mind. All other tests of books, as for example their age, their truth, their helpfulness, are subsidiary and confirmatory. The final ground of Canonicity was the Apostolicity of the books, they came from Apostles, or Apostolic men who were companions of the Apostles.

<sup>1</sup> The word “Canon” means a *measure* (κανών), and was originally used of a reed or rod which was first measured and then used as a standard of measurement. As applied to Holy Scripture a “Canonical book” is a book which has been first “measured” by the Christian consciousness of the Church and is now used as a standard of measurement for all other claimants to the position of authority.

2. One weighty reason for regarding Scripture as our supreme authority **is the claim of Scripture itself.** The Old Testament obviously could not claim finality for itself as a whole because of its gradual growth from separate authors, but we can see certain elements in the process when we read that the Prophets made Scripture (Deut. xviii. 15-20), and claimed Divine inspiration (2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Isa. ix. 8; Jer. ii. 1; Ezek. i. 3). The New Testament certainly sets its seal retrospectively on the finality of the Old Testament. Our Lord and His Apostles speak with no uncertain voice as to the supremacy and finality of the Scriptures of the Old Covenant (Luke ii. 4, 27-44; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 2 Pet. i. 21).

For a similar reason the New Testament could not claim finality for itself owing to its gradual growth, but we are able to see certain features which point in this direction. Our Lord laid great emphasis on His own words (John xvii. 12; xviii. 9, 37). St. Paul laid claim to inspiration (1 Cor. xiv. 37; 1 Thess. iv. 2-8). There is also a mutual attestation of authors within the New Testament (Acts i. 1; Luke i. 1-4; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16). The same thing is evident from St. Jude's remarkable phrase, "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (verse 3). All these seem to involve an implicit claim to finality on the part of the New Testament, and indeed it is implied in the whole matter and manner of the writings. The tone of authority and command is unmistakable, and is much more striking than any verbal assertions to this effect, as we may see from the opening of the Pauline Epistles, especially Galatians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, as well as St. Peter and St. John's writings.

3. We also hold the finality and supremacy of the New Testament, because of the **clear testimony of Church history.** The following points summarize this and deserve special attention.

(1) The general tenor of the writings of the Fathers is undoubted and pronounced in this direction.

(2) At the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon the Gospels occupied a prominent position in the middle of the assemblage. This was a silent but significant testimony to the supreme authority of Scripture in all disputes on doctrine.

(3) Every heresy, too, claimed to be based on Scripture, and this showed the importance placed thereon.

(4) Certain books, which were revered in the early Church, like the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas, were soon set aside and clearly distinguished from the Canonical books.

(5) The ancient liturgies of the Church were also saturated with Holy Scripture.

(6) The most severe attacks on Christianity have in every age been directed against the Word of God.

4. The Divine power and authority of Scripture can also be seen in a very simple and convincing way. **The dates of the New Testament books** clearly show the limited period of the activity of the Spirit of inspiration. About fifty years after the Ascension, just as soon as the facts of redemption were thoroughly announced, the work of transcription began (A.D. 50-100), and then comes a change abrupt and abysmal. It has been said that there is no transition so radical and sudden, and yet so silent, as the transition from the New Testament books to the early Christian writings of the second century. One of the most beautiful and interesting of the latter is the Epistle to Diognetus, a vindication of the superiority of Christianity over heathenism, and yet when compared with the New Testament everyone is at once conscious of the remarkable gulf between them. The dates of the New Testament books are therefore evidences of a special activity of the Holy Spirit and of the limitation of this special activity to those dates. The Holy Spirit, though active subsequent to this, was not active in the same way, and we may therefore define inspiration as the peculiar and unique activity of the Holy Spirit. We thus distinguish between His unique and special inspiration, and His ordinary and general illumination.

5. We also argue for the supremacy of Scripture from **the nature of the case**. The Person of Christ is the basis of Christianity, and what we need is the earliest and purest historical embodiment of that revelation. This was not possible after the first century. Tradition is weaker and less reliable than written documents and ever tends to deteriorate. We see what tradition did for Judaism (Mark vii. 1-13). It is also at least noteworthy that all the great systems of religion have their sacred books, as though a book were absolutely necessary to religion.

In all the foregoing it must be borne in mind that we have been concerned with the fundamental grounds on which we accept the New Testament as the supreme authority of God for our life. The particular reasons and detailed arguments for considering these grounds satisfying can hardly be dealt with here, for they are properly part of the subject of Christian evidences. All that we are now concerned with is the primary basis of our Church's acceptance of the books of the New Testament as the Word of God.

Each book originally had its separate and Divine authority, and this authority would have remained even if all the books had not been collected and made one volume, so that Canonicity really implies the existence of the authority of the separate books, which, by being collected together, are, as it were, codified. The Revelation did not come to exist because of the Canonicity, but the

Canonicity because of the Revelation, and the Bible is God's revelation because it embodies the historic revelation of our Lord as the Redeemer.

6. **The Inspiration of Scripture.**—The Church of England has never promulgated any particular theory of inspiration, though it is worth while noticing the reference in Article XX to "God's Word *written*." The Church accepts the plenary and supreme authority of Holy Scripture, and when once the question of its authority is settled the particular method of the Divine inspiration is really only secondary. The main question is, Are the vital things affirmed in the Bible true? If they are, they are authoritative for us whatever may be the method whereby God delivered them to the Prophets and Apostles. When, however, we consider the meaning of inspiration we are to understand a special influence of the Holy Spirit differing not only in degree but in kind from His ordinary spiritual illumination.

The word "inspiration" is variously applied. It is used (1) Of the communication of knowledge to the natural man (Job xxxii. 8); (2) Of the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit on the heart (cf. First Collect in the Holy Communion Service, and the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter). But by the inspiration of Holy Scripture we mean the communication of Divine truth in a way which is unique both in degree and kind. It is best to confine the use of the word "inspiration" to the act of writing and the methods of composition, and the word "revelation" to the truth written. The Apostles were evidently inspired to teach orally, and the New Testament is clear as to their position as founders of the Church. With regard to their oral teaching they certainly had full authority and plenary inspiration, and yet of the eight writers of the New Testament five were Apostles, whose inspiration could hardly have left them when they began to write, while the other books were written by men in special relation to the Apostles.

Revelation is a record of the thoughts of God for the life of man, and if His will is to be handed down it must be put into words. We cannot be sure of the thoughts if we are not sure of the words, and authority and inspiration must therefore in some way or other extend to the language. St. Peter tells us that the *men* (2 Pet. i. 21), and St. Paul that their *writings* were inspired (2 Tim. iii. 16). This view of inspiration is justified by a number of considerations. The authority of "God's word *written*" has always been regarded of the greatest possible weight by the Church. We see this in—

(a) The detailed and constant use of the Bible to-day in the life and work of the Churches.



(b) The scholarly and minute exegesis of Holy Scripture in all ages, especially to-day.

(c) The appeal to the words of the Bible in all matters of controversy.

(d) The Belief on this point in the Apostolic Churches (*see* Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, appendix i.).

(e) The use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers, with several hundreds of quotations (one writer says 600), often depending on verbal points, and the phrases, "It is written"; "The Scripture"; and "Scriptures."

It is evident from all this that the authority of Scripture must be based on the meaning of its language.

The following distinctions in our use of the word "inspiration" are to be noted. Inspiration is a general term including several methods of procedure in the composition of Scripture.

(a) There is the inspiration involved in a direct communication from God (1 Thess. iv. 15).

(b) There is the inspiration involved in the selection of material whereby the writers were guided to choose out of a larger mass of material that which was needed for their particular purpose (Luke i. 1-4; John xx. 30 f.).

(c) There is the inspiration which guarantees an accurate record; for example, the speeches of Job's friends, the sins of God's people are recorded, but they are not justified by God simply because they find a place in Scripture. Inspiration here guarantees not the truth of the utterances but the accuracy of the accounts as recorded.

(d) There is the inspiration connected with what is known as progressive revelation. It is obvious from our point of view that not every part of the Scripture is of equal importance, though everything is necessary in its own place and for its own purpose. Revelation is progressive, it was perfect at each stage for that stage, but not necessarily beyond it. The morality of each period must be judged from the standpoint of the particular stage, and not from the clear light of the New Testament teaching. We only accept Old Testament counsels and commands if they are justified from the New Testament level of knowledge.

We can easily see from all this the need of careful discrimination in our use of Holy Scripture. What we call the Bible contains the record of men's words of falsehood as well as God's word of truth, as, for instance, the speeches of Job's friends, the words of Satan, and the utterances of false prophets. When, therefore, we read that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" we are not to regard every word contained in Scripture as conveying the Divine message, true in itself, but we must inquire whether the particular

part is declared to be true or false, what it means (not merely what it says) and whether it is suitable for our use.

It will help us in our understanding of Holy Scripture to notice the analogy between the Incarnate Word and the Written Word. They are both Divine and both human, though it is impossible to say in either case where the Divine ends and the human begins. The human and the Divine elements of Holy Scripture are inseparable and carry their own message of light, life and power to all who are willing to know the truth and follow it.

## CHAPTER III

### *THE OLD TESTAMENT*

ONE of the most pressing and vital questions of modern days is the place and power of the Old Testament in the Christian Church. The position of the Church of England on this subject is, however, clear and undoubted.

**I. The Canon of the Old Testament.**—Article VI gives a list of the Old Testament Books as we have them to-day and speaks of them as “canonical,” that is, as part of Holy Scripture. In accordance with this statement Lessons from the Old Testament are used in the Daily Services throughout the year. At the same time, as we have already noticed, the Church carefully distinguishes between the other books which are generally spoken of as the Old Testament Apocrypha. Selections from these are appointed to be read from time to time in the daily lessons, but they are not used to establish any doctrine. In this view of the Old Testament Canon our Church is in strict accordance, not only with modern Jewish belief on the subject, but also with the views of the Jewish Church throughout the centuries. The modern Hebrew Bible of the Jews is exactly the same as our Old Testament. The Jewish Commentaries known as the Talmud and the Targums, hold the same position, while the greatest scholars of the early ages of the Christian Church, such as Jerome in the fourth century, Origen in the third century, and Melito, Bishop of Sardis, in the second century, all bear witness to the distinction between the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. The Jewish testimony of Josephus in the first century is identical with all the foregoing, and this would seem true of Philo also, though in his case the evidence is not so precise. Above all, there is the most assured warrant for believing that the Bible of our Lord and His Apostles was the same as our Old Testament.

No doctrine is made to depend on passages from the Apocrypha, and thus we are on firm ground when we use our Old Testament to-day in the same way as our Lord and His Apostles used theirs.

**2. The Permanent Value of the Old Testament.**—Article VII gives us the Church teaching on this subject.

“The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, Who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any Commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.”

The teaching of this article may thus be summarized—

- (a) The essential oneness of both parts of Scripture.
- (b) The ground of this oneness: our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (c) The essential spirituality of the Old Testament.
- (d) The temporary nature of the Ceremonial Law.
- (e) The permanence of the Moral Law.

(a) The essential unity of the Old and New Testaments is due to the fact that in both of them the subject is Christ, the Messiah and Mediator; and the Author of both is the Holy Spirit. When we carefully study the Old Testament we find there are three lines of teaching running through it from Genesis to Malachi. It is a Book (1) of unfulfilled prophecies; (2) of unexplained ceremonies; (3) of unsatisfied longings, and it closes, therefore, as an incomplete book, for at the time when prophecy became silent after the death of Malachi the predictions were still unfulfilled, the ceremonial ritual was in great measure unexplained, and the earnest spiritual desires of the people of Israel unrealized.

(b) When we turn to the New Testament we find the explanation of the incompleteness of the Old Testament. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, completely realizes what was foretold, expected, and desired in Old Testament times. As the Prophet of God, as the Priest and Sacrifice, and as the King, He fulfils the prophecies of the Old Covenant, explains the ceremonies, and satisfies the longings, and thus, according to the well-known phrase of Augustine, “in the Old Testament the New is concealed and in the New the Old is revealed.” The Apostle Paul clearly teaches that the Old Testament with the simple but all-essential requirement of faith in Christ Jesus is “able to make wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. iii. 15). Our Lord after His Resurrection expounded unto His disciples “in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke xxiv. 25-27), and in like manner the Apostle Paul, in his missionary work in the Synagogues, constantly showed the fulfilment of Old Testa-

ment prediction in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (Acts xiii. 32-39; xxvi. 22, 23; xxviii. 23).

(c) The Article rightly urges that the Patriarchs and Prophets looked for more than transitory promises. They anticipated the spiritual blessings of the Messianic days. Everlasting life in the Old Testament is implied as included in the Divine Covenant, rather than definitely proclaimed. The Old Testament necessarily emphasizes the present rather than the future, because the purposes of God for Israel were specifically concerned with national life and the bearing of Israel's relationship to this world. We are not therefore surprised to find comparatively little about the future life in the Old Testament, though it is clearly found there, and indeed, is involved in the very relation of the believing Jew to God. Union with God necessarily implies an everlasting relationship, and in this the future life is obviously included. "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). Our Lord's words, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32) show at once the fact of the future life in Old Testament times and also the comparative obscurity of the Old Testament revelation (*see also* John viii. 56; Heb. xi. 10, 13, 16). The true relation between the Old and New Covenants on this subject is clearly stated by St. Paul when he says, "The appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath *illuminated* life and immortality through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10, Greek).

(d) The temporary elements of the Old Testament are obvious to all. Among these are such matters as the theocracy, or the direct government of God; the union of the Jewish Church and State; the human sacrificing priesthood and visible sacrifices; and the general legal spirit underlying the Mosaic economy.

(e) The permanent elements of the Old Testament include its doctrine of the Godhead; its experience of holy and humble men of heart; its typical teaching, pointing forward to the Messiah; the moral lessons derivable from the history of the Jews; and above all, the essential principles of the moral law which appeal to human consciences at all times. The moral law in relation to Christians to-day is of course not the means of their justification or judicial standing before God, but is part of that life of righteousness which is the outcome and fruit of their union with God in Christ. It is thus that the Apostle Paul uses the Commandments in such passages as Ephesians vi. 1, 2.

3. **The True View of the Old Testament.**—The Christian attitude towards the Old Testament will be guided and ruled by three great considerations.



(a) It will be in keeping with the general position of the Old Testament among the Jews in all ages. The Old Testament, as we possess it, represents and embodies Jewish national life and history for many centuries. The Book and the people grew up together, and the Book was at once the record and the standard of the national life of the people. This is the great outstanding fact that no literary or subjective considerations can touch, and the Church of England position in relation to the Old Testament is exactly in keeping with all that we know of the Jewish origin and history of the Scriptures of the Old Covenant.

(b) The Christian experience of the centuries of the Church is a great factor in determining the true attitude of the individual Christian to the Old Testament. All through the ages the Old Testament has been the instruction and nourishment of the spiritual life of millions of God's people. Great intellects, as well as holy characters, have been influenced and guided by it, and we follow their example in adhering closely to the Old Testament.

(c) Above all, our Old Testament was the Bible of our Blessed Lord, and His testimony to it and use of it are the determining factors of our attitude to it. He quotes from most of the books; He uses it as of Divine authority, urging "it is written" against those who would go contrary to its mind and spirit. His references to the history of Old Testament times are clear and undoubted, and on these grounds our Lord's authority with regard to the Old Testament is final for all Christian people.

These are the three great and important principles which should determine our view of the Old Testament, and they should be constantly applied to all modern writings which treat of the Old Testament. There are certain destructive views of the Old Testament which are generally associated with what is called the "Higher Criticism," though the term ought not to be identified solely with novel and erroneous views of Holy Scripture. Biblical criticism is usually described by the terms "lower" or "higher" criticism. The former concerns itself with the true Biblical text, its preservation and transmission, while the latter is occupied with the literary and historical questions arising out of the text before us. It is obvious, therefore, that what is called "higher" criticism is not only a legitimate but a necessary method for all Christians, and by its use we are able to discover very much about the facts and form of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. It is the wrong use of this method against which we should be on our guard, and it is here that the three fundamental principles stated above will be found of the greatest possible service. They will prevent us from being influenced by mere subjective and personal considerations, and will

help us to keep before our minds the great outstanding facts of history and Christian experience which are the foundation of the true view of the Old Testament. It is the simple truth that much of present-day discussion of the Old Testament is concerned with linguistic questions and theories, and also with philosophic and historical problems which tend to ignore, if not to set aside, the supernatural elements of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Holy Scripture warrants and welcomes all possible examination, but it is necessary to remember that arguments based on differences of language are not conclusive in themselves and require to be tested and safeguarded by the great facts of history. It is well known, too, that archaeological discoveries in Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine during the past half century have done much to confirm the truth of the Old Testament on those very points on which doubts have been cast by the inadequate and one-sided treatment of certain schools of critics.<sup>1</sup> Not only so, but not a single feature distinctive of Modern Criticism is supported by archaeology.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the Bible is at once a human and a Divine book. In some respects it is like other books and is to be examined and tested accordingly, but in other respects it is unlike all other books and the superhuman and supernatural elements must never be overlooked in our endeavour to arrive at the truth.

Two great principles may, in conclusion, be emphasized as summing up the truth on this important subject. The first is that from the very nature of the case God's revelation must be a revelation of truth, and we believe that the Old Testament, like the New, came from Him Who is the Spirit of Truth, and Whose actions are therefore guided and limited by this essential attribute. The second principle is that for a proper understanding of the Word of God, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, spiritual perception and experience is as essential as intellectual ability and historical knowledge, and it is only when all requirements are blended and utilized that truth will really be discovered. By all means let us have all possible expert knowledge ; but since Biblical questions are often complex and far-reaching, involving a number of considerations, we need expert knowledge of several kinds, of archaeology, history, theology, philology, and not least of all we need spiritual experience. Every available factor must be taken into account, for the questions cannot be decided by intellectual criticism alone. Scripture makes its weightiest appeal to conscience, heart, and will. "The meek will He guide in judgment" (Ps. xxv. 9). "He that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17).

<sup>1</sup> Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*.

When Christian character and experience are allowed to take their proper share in the decision of Old Testament problems the answer will be given with unmistakable clearness in confirmation of those great realities which have ever been the joy and power of the Church of Christ.

In our use of the Old Testament there is constant need of avoiding two errors ; one, that of treating the Old Testament as though it were the New, forgetful of the progressiveness and incompleteness of its revelation, and the other, that of ignoring the Old Testament altogether, as though it were of no present value except as a record of ancient history. The true view will avoid these extremes and find in the Old Testament what the Lord and His Apostles found ; instruction for mind and heart, inspiration for conscience and soul, and some of the most essential elements towards a proper understanding of the complete revelation of God in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER IV <sup>1</sup>

### CATHOLICITY (I)

THE Church of England of course distinguishes between particular Churches and the whole Church of Christ. In the Preface there is a reference to "established Doctrine, or laudable Practice of the Church of England, or indeed of the whole Catholick Church of Christ," and in Article XIX reference is made to particular Churches such as those of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome. The title of the Book of Common Prayer is also worthy of note in this connexion. It is described as "The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England." It is therefore necessary and important to have a clear conception of what the Church of England regards as essential Christianity and of the grounds on which she justifies her position as an integral part of the "whole Catholick Church of Christ." We are thus brought face to face with the question known as that of Catholicity and the application of the idea to the Church of England.

#### I. The Meaning of the Catholicity of the Church of England.

(a) The original idea of the word "Catholic" was that of *geographical extension and diffusion*. The meaning was simply that

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this and the following chapter was read as a paper and afterwards published in pamphlet form.

of "universality," as, for instance, in the phrase "Thy Holy Church Universal." It pointed to Christianity as a religion capable of universal diffusion, with all men eligible for membership, and all men equal in that membership. This is undoubtedly the meaning of the word as first used by Ignatius and Polycarp.<sup>1</sup> The word is thus essentially indicative of the supreme purpose of Christianity, and may be said to form a strong plea for world-wide evangelization.

(b) Then followed the thought of *doctrinal purity and fullness* as a mark of true Christian Catholicity. By purity and completeness of doctrine is to be understood the doctrine which most closely adhered to the Christianity of our Lord and His Apostles. This extension of the meaning of the word may have been directed against Judaism, as it certainly was against heresy. Bishop Lightfoot points out that the original meaning of the word is "universal" as opposed to "particular," and then it comes to mean "orthodoxy" as opposed to "heresy." "The truth was the same everywhere, the heresies were partial, scattered, localized, isolated."<sup>2</sup> This transference of idea from geographical extension to doctrinal fullness can be seen in the term "the Catholic faith." Acceptance of and adherence to the truth of Christianity in its purity and fullness constituted this secondary idea of Catholicity, though we can easily see that the word in this application tends to exclusion, while in the former case the emphasis was on the idea of inclusion.

(c) This geographical expansion and doctrinal purity found their expression in *Church unity and fellowship*. Originally this fellowship was necessarily congregational in type; then it became enlarged to include associations of particular congregations within a town or country. Then came the era of the great patriarchates; later came the great schism of Eastern and Western Christianity, each having its own ideas of Catholicity. In the East, Catholicity took the form of orthodox belief, combined with the autonomy of several Churches. In the West, Catholicity took the form of ecclesiastical unity under the Papacy. At the Reformation the Church of England adopted a position practically identical with that of Eastern Christendom in insisting upon the right of separate Churches, whether national or otherwise, to be autonomous, while preserving the essentials of the Catholic faith of Christendom.

These three associated ideas of geographical diffusion, doctrinal purity, and ecclesiastical fellowship are all illustrated in the Prayer Book by the phrases, "the Catholic Faith," "the good estate of the Catholic Church," "all who profess and call themselves Christians,"

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lightfoot's *Commentary on Ignatius* (Epistle to Smyrna, chap. viii., note).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Strong's *Manual of Theology*, 1st edition, p. 360, note.



"all them that do confess Thy Holy Name," "Thine elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Thy Son," "the holy Catholic Church." The words of the Bidding Prayer are also noteworthy: "Ye shall pray for Christ's whole Catholic Church; that is, for the whole congregation of Christ's people dispersed throughout the world."<sup>1</sup>

For our present purpose it will be unnecessary to refer further to the original idea of universality which we naturally take for granted in any consideration of Christian Catholicity. We concentrate our attention on—

## 2. The Marks of the Catholicity of the Church of England.

(a) At the foundation of Catholicity is the *Christian doctrine of the Godhead* as laid down in the three Creeds, and as theologically stated in Articles I to V. This includes the doctrine of God as Creator and Father, as transcendent and immanent; of the Holy Trinity; of the Incarnation of our Lord; of the Atonement; of the Resurrection and Ascension; of the Deity of the Holy Ghost. About these fundamental truths there can be no question; they constitute "the Catholic Faith."

(b) Arising out of this doctrine come the *special applications and implications* emphasized at the time of the Reformation. It is not unnecessary to repeat that our Prayer Book, as it stands, is primarily and essentially a product of the sixteenth century, and of that movement known as the Protestant Reformation. Our Church formularies can only be rightly understood when viewed in connexion with the circumstances which led to their compilation and composition. At that time certain distinctive principles were emphasized by the Church of England, and these principles must be thoroughly understood if we would arrive at an accurate knowledge of true Anglican Catholicity. What, then, was distinctive about the English Reformation?

(1) The first distinctive principle was the insistence on *true spiritual authority*.—Holy Scripture, as we have seen, was declared to be supreme in all necessary matters of faith and practice; and whatsoever was not read therein, nor could be proved thereby, was not to be required of any man as an article of faith or as necessary to salvation (Art. VI). The three Creeds were to be received, not because of their usefulness or their antiquity or their universality, but because they could be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture (Art. VIII). The Church cannot ordain anything contrary to God's Word written, nor ought it to decree anything against the same, or enforce anything besides the same as necessary to salvation (Art. XX). General Councils have neither strength nor

<sup>1</sup> Canons of 1604. No. 55.

authority in things necessary to salvation unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture (Art. XXI). Doctrines concerning the Sacraments, ministry, and discipline are also deliberately subjected to the supreme authority of Holy Scripture (Arts. XXII-XXXIV).

(2) The next distinctive principle of the Reformation was the *true spiritual access of the soul to God* as indicated by the phrase "justification by faith." The repentant sinner is accepted with God through faith in Christ, apart from all personal merit and work, and this acceptance carries with it access to God's presence at all times without the help of any intermediary, and guarantees constant, free, and full fellowship between the soul and God.

(3) The third distinctive principle of the Reformation was its insistence on the *true spiritual meaning of the Sacraments*. The keynote of English Reformation and Prayer Book teaching on the Sacraments is the necessity of right and worthy reception; the efficacy of these ordinances is conditional on faithful use. They do not "contain" grace apart from worthy dispositions in the recipients. No *opus operatum*, i.e. the administration of rite alone, apart from spiritual conditions, can guarantee the bestowal of grace. Faith is the correlative of grace; the Sacraments are visible signs to which are annexed promises.<sup>1</sup> They appeal to faith, and only through faith are efficacious.

These three distinctive principles are as clear to-day in our Prayer Book as they were in 1552, for the simple reason that they have never been altered in any essential respect, and all true English Church Catholicity must include and give prominence to these significant and unmistakable aspects of truth. In these three particulars, above all others, the Church of England in the sixteenth century protested against the current and predominant views of that day, and in so doing was not adopting any merely negative position, but one that was essentially positive and Catholic. As the Bishop of Bristol (Dr. G. F. Browne) said at the Church Congress of 1903—

"Protest and Protestant are positive words, not negative, and connote a public declaration of positive testimony. The translators of the Bible knew what the word meant in their day when they made Paul say, 'I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.'"

And Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, of Lincoln, wrote—

"The Church of England became Protestant at the Reformation in order that she might be more truly and purely Catholic."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Homily of Common Prayer and Sacraments, *The Homilies*.

<sup>2</sup> *Theophilus Anglicanus*, p. 177.

(c) The general Christian doctrine, together with the special Reformation applications, was expressed and fostered by *Church fellowship and ministry* as laid down in our Prayer Book, Articles and Ordinal.

(1) The *fact of Church fellowship* is seen in the definition of the visible Church (Art. XIX) with its two "notes" of the Word of God preached, and the Sacraments duly ministered.

(2) The *fact of Ministry* is seen in the insistence on due order and appointment of all lawful ministry (Art. XXIII).

(3) The *form of the Church and ministry* was what we now know as episcopal, a result rendered possible by the special characteristics of the English as contrasted with the Continental Reformation. On the Continent spiritual reformation came first as a protest against the intervention of the Church; in England political reformation came first, as a protest against the interference of the Pope; and it was mainly this particular state of affairs which enabled us in England to preserve continuity so far as organization and ministry were concerned.

(4) But while there was this continuity of title, name, and visible organization, the foundation *facts and meanings of the Church and ministry underwent very serious and significant modifications and alterations*. In the Ordinal everything associated with sacerdotal doctrine and symbolism was deliberately removed. Articles XIX and XXIII, on the Church and ministry, are couched in the most general terms, and, as is well known, the former Article is almost verbally identical with the Confession of Augsburg, and was intended as the basis of a concordat between Cranmer and the German non-episcopal Reformers. Even the reference to the Ordinal of those days (Art. XXXVI) only states that it had not "anything that of itself is superstitious and ungodly," and simply declares those who were ordained and consecrated by means of it, "rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered." The preface to the Ordinal, drawn up, be it ever remembered, with the exception of one phrase, by the men who composed the above Articles, consistently speaks of the three orders of ministry as having existed from Apostolic times, and therefore to be "held in reverend estimation." As Bishop Gibson, in his work on the Articles, rightly says—

"Certainly all that the actual terms of the Article now under consideration bind us to is this; that episcopacy is not in itself superstitious or ungodly. This amounts to no more than saying that it is *an allowable form of Church government*, and leaves the question open whether it is the only one. This question is not decided for us elsewhere in the Articles; for even where we might

have reasonably expected some light to be thrown upon it, we are met with a remarkable silence. . . . The Articles, then, leave us without any real guidance on the question whether episcopacy is to be regarded as *necessary*.”<sup>1</sup> (*Italics are the author's.*)

Even when the Church of England requires for her own ministers episcopal ordination, as she has done since 1662, the reference is inclusive, not exclusive. To quote Dr. Gibson again—

“It is interesting to notice how she treats the subject entirely from a practical point of view, pronouncing on it, not as an abstract theological question, but only as it concerns herself. She is not called upon to judge others.”<sup>2</sup>

From the considerations stated above we can see the true teaching of the Church of England on the subject of Catholicity. Our Reformers well knew that they were not losing any essential feature of the Catholic position by the action that they were compelled to take in severing themselves from the jurisdiction of the Papacy. Subordination to Rome was never required as a condition of Catholicity. The history and decisions of the General Councils clearly prove this.

## CHAPTER V

### CATHOLICITY (2)

AT the foundation of the position of the Church of England as stated in the former chapter there are certain principles which form the justification and warrant of our true Catholicity. To a consideration of these principles we have now to turn our attention, as well as to some pressing practical matters arising out of the whole subject.

#### I. The Tests of Catholicity of the Church of England.

(a) The supreme test of all true Catholicity lies in *Apostolicity*—that is in essential agreement with the New Testament. “To the law and to the testimony.” The New Testament embodies the revelation of God in Christ in its purest form. It is the record of that revelation given by men who were uniquely qualified to be the exponents of the Divine will to man. Just as, in the formation of the New Testament, Apostolicity was the one test of Canonicity, so, in everything connected with the life and progress of the Church, the Apostolic authority of the New Testament is supreme and final. This is the cardinal feature of the Church of England position as

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 746.



laid down at the Reformation and as it abides in our Prayer Book to-day.

(b) Subject to this supreme test of Apostolicity the Church of England allows and urges a *corroborative test*—that of antiquity. In the Prayer Book and Articles—that is, in the only formularies that have full and undoubted legal authority over the members of the Church of England—Scripture, and Scripture alone, is stated to be the sole and supreme authority ; but there are clear indications in other documents of admitted weight and influence which show that the compilers of our Prayer Book did not hesitate to make an appeal to Christian antiquity in support and corroboration of their Scriptural position. The Canons of 1571, although they never had legal sanction and therefore are not legally binding to-day, are valuable as indicating a line taken by leading divines in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They charge the clergy not to teach anything “except it be agreeable to the doctrines of the Old or New Testaments, and whatever the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected out of that very doctrine” ; and the Canons of 1604 consistently claim for the Church of England Liturgy and forms of worship that they are in agreement with true Catholic and Apostolic Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Jewel’s historic appeal is entirely in line with this position. In his great sermon at St. Paul’s Cross he boldly flung down a challenge to the Roman Church to prove any of her distinctive doctrines as having been held within the first six centuries. Jewel’s position has, of course, often been misunderstood to mean that he accepted everything within the first six centuries as necessarily Catholic ; but this is an entirely erroneous interpretation. The Bishop was on the defensive, meeting charges against the Church of England of having introduced changes and novelties, and this was his way of refuting these charges. He does not for an instant mean that everything found within those centuries is necessarily Catholic. What he does mean and say is that nothing which is *not* found within those centuries can be in any true sense Catholic.

This appeal to antiquity is a position of great importance and real value, and can be illustrated from nearly all the great writers of the Church of England during the last three hundred years. From Cranmer, Ridley, and Rogers the martyrs, right through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English Church theologians constantly appealed to antiquity in corroboration of the Apostolic position and purity of the Church of England.

Yet this use of antiquity is ever to be safeguarded by a constant appeal to Holy Scripture as the ultimate and supreme authority.

<sup>1</sup> See also “Homily for Whitsunday.”

As the Bishop of Exeter (Dr. Robertson) well said at the Church Congress of 1903 at Bristol, "The decisions of the early Church in the undisputed General Councils bind us ultimately, because they make no addition to what is taught in Scripture. They interpret, but do not deign to add." "The English Church teaches but one religion, the religion of our Lord's Apostles recorded in Holy Scripture, and guarded in essentials by the decisions of the ancient Catholic Church. To the voice of antiquity she listens with deference on points not so decided, but subject always to the immovable truth of the sufficiency of Holy Scripture."

Another safeguard of this appeal to antiquity is the necessary distinction between things essential and non-essential. There are many points in connexion with Church life and ritual which have never been formally settled by the whole Church. Such questions must inevitably arise from time to time, as they have always arisen through the centuries, and variations in rites and ceremonies are inevitable and to be welcomed. The danger to be continually guarded against is of transforming non-essentials into essentials, and insisting upon certain matters as of Divine obligation which have neither warrant in Scripture nor in the records of the primitive Church. The well-known formula of Vincent of Lerins,<sup>1</sup> *Quod semper, quod ubique, et quod ab omnibus* ("That which (has been believed) always, everywhere, and by all"), is often used as though it covered almost every doctrine and practice found in one section of the Christian world of to-day. The Vincentian position deserves the greatest possible weight if only it is properly interpreted. Let anything be shown to have the testimony of universality, antiquity, and consent, and few Christians would be found to deny its great authority; but the *semper* must be literally *semper*, the *ubique* really *ubique* and the *ab omnibus* truly *ab omnibus*. We must not limit these requirements to a favourite section or a particular age of the Church. If the Vincentian rule had been applied literally during the fourth century it would have gone very far towards the justification of Arianism, when nearly the whole Christian world went astray. Let us apply it rigidly, fairly, and fully, so as to include in our "always," "everywhere," and "by all," the Church of the New Testament and the Apostolic age, and we shall soon be able to see how far the rule is applicable and of real validity.

It is well known that one sentence found in St. Augustine made a deep impression on John Henry Newman, and led to his submission to the Roman Church. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum* ("The judg-

<sup>1</sup> A presbyter of Gaul in fifth century. Author of a work against Heretics, entitled *Commonitorium*. See article in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

ment of the whole world must be right.")<sup>1</sup> But unfortunately, with a strange lack of logic, Newman's *orbis terrarum* was only a mere segment of the world, the segment known as the Roman Church; and on such a principle a man might be led to accept anything that is put before him. If only we could discover what in reality has been decided by the real *orbis terrarum* of the Christian Church, it would carry with it very great weight for all who profess and call themselves Christians; yet even so it would not be necessarily infallible, and would need the constant and searching test of the Divine Scriptures of the New Covenant.

(c) With the New Testament as our supreme authority, and antiquity corroborating and supporting each appeal to Holy Scripture, we have the adequate and complete tests of all Catholicity; and it is therefore necessary at this point to call attention to one position which has been urged, and is being urged, as a necessary test of Catholicity—namely, what is termed Apostolic Succession, but which really means to those who use the phrase, Episcopal Succession. The Church of England has never committed herself to this untenable position either in her formularies or in the writings of her best and most representative men. Unbroken episcopal or indeed any other ministerial succession is no necessary guarantee of Catholicity.<sup>2</sup> We can see this in the entire absence of any reference to episcopacy in the Articles—a silence which, as we have noticed, is significantly admitted by Dr. Gibson in his important work on the XXXIX Articles. The fact of Cranmer's well-known attempts to form a concordat between the Continental and the English Reformers shows conclusively what was his mind as one of the chief compilers of the Prayer Book. Another testimony in the same direction is the fact of Presbyterian ministers being accepted and appointed to livings in the Church of England between 1552 and 1662 without re-ordination. Archbishop Leighton and all the other Scottish Bishops of his day (except one) never required re-ordination of Presbyterian ministers on entrance into the Scottish Episcopal Church.<sup>3</sup> This, too, was the position taken up by the Church authorities in the reign of Elizabeth, as Keble's well-known words clearly show—

"It might have been expected that the defenders of the English hierarchy against the first Puritans should take the highest ground and challenge for the Bishops the same unreserved submission on the same plea of exclusive Apostolical prerogative, which their adversaries feared not to insist on for

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sanday renders this phrase: "The whole world cannot go wrong."—*Oracles of God*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii, p. 683: "If the Church is Apostolic, it must be so not merely by hereditary connexion, but by Spiritual Conformity."

<sup>3</sup> *Butler's Life and Letters of Archbishop Leighton*, pp. 364, 428.

their elders and deacons. It is notorious, however, that such was not in general the line preferred by Jewel, Whitgift, Bishop Cooper, and others, to whom the management of that controversy was entrusted during the early part of Elizabeth's reign. . . . It is enough with them to show that the government by archbishops and bishops is ancient and allowable; they never venture to urge its *exclusive* claims, or to connect the succession with the validity of the holy Sacraments." <sup>1</sup>

In the classic work *Of the Church*, by Dean Field, published early in the seventeenth century, that great theologian speaks in no uncertain language about the impossibility of succession of Bishops and pastors being a necessary note of the Church—

"Let us see whether succession of Bishops and pastors may truly be said to be a note of the Church. Absolutely and without limitation, doubtless it is not. For there may be a continued succession of Bishops where there is no true Church."

"Thus still we see that truth of doctrine is a necessary note whereby the Church must be known and discerned, and not ministry and succession, or anything else without it."

"In the meanwhile it sufficeth that not bare and naked succession, but true and lawful, wherein no new or strange doctrine is brought into the Church, but the ancient religiously preserved, is a mark, note, or character of the new Church." <sup>2</sup>

Even the well-known Tractarian writer, Palmer, in his treatise on the Church, is compelled to allow that non-Episcopal Churches on the Continent at the time of the Reformation did not lose their Catholicity by losing their episcopal organization. He admits that they were neither heretical nor schismatic, that through no fault of their own they had no episcopal ministry, and that the want of it was excusable and unavoidable. <sup>3</sup>

There is no trace in Scripture of any covenanted connexion between grace and episcopacy, or indeed between grace and any one particular form of government or polity. The two "notes," essential and adequate, of the true Church are the Word and the Sacraments. It is the *fact*, and not any particular form of Church fellowship, that is thus emphasized. If the compilers of the Prayer Book had held the view that grace was associated solely with episcopacy it is impossible that they could have been silent on the matter. Catholicity must be proved first and foremost by adherence to the Catholic Faith, and not by adherence to any one form of organization. The only warrant for regarding succession as a necessary test of Catholicity is the belief that such succession is the

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Hooker's *Works*, op. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Field, *Of the Church*, vol. i, pp. 83, 84. See also Pearson on the Creed, and Dean Jackson on the word "Catholic," quoted in Archdeacon Sinclair's *Second Charge*, 1892, p. 23; Philpot's *Works*, Parker Society, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *A Treatise on the Church of Christ*, i, pp. 292 ff. See also the admission by Bishop Mackenzie in *The Apostolic Ministry* (ed. K. E. Kirk), p. 466: "It may turn out that the effects of the abolition of episcopacy . . . were not in all cases entirely mischievous."—J. S. W.



only guarantee of grace. This position has never been endorsed or maintained by the Church of England in her formularies or by her truest exponents, and no one who does not make the essence of the Church rest in its visibility would dream of adopting a position so entirely untenable from the standpoint of Scripture, primitive antiquity, and modern experience. Truth, not organization, is the essence of Catholicity.

Since these are the true tests of Catholicity, our next question is as to—

## 2. The Maintenance of the Catholicity of the Church of England.

How are the great principles enshrined in our Prayer Book to be maintained and furthered?

(a) By steadfast adherence to the *fundamental doctrinal position* of the Creeds and Articles I to V. The Christian doctrine of the Godhead, with all that it implies, must ever remain the foundation of all Catholicity. The doctrine of an essential and eternal Trinity, the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, involving a clear belief and honest confession that the words "Born of the Virgin Mary" mean what they say; a whole-hearted belief in the atoning Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour; a belief in the Godhead and indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit; these are the great foundation realities of all Catholicity.

(b) By determined adherence to the *distinctive position of the Church of England laid down at the Reformation*. The supremacy of Holy Scripture must at all costs be insisted on. It is the assertion of the historic basis of Christianity free from all later accretions. It is the charter of our spiritual freedom, and the only guarantee of vital and essential truth. Bishop Gore, referring to the way in which the Western Church of the Middle Ages allowed tradition to usurp the place of the Bible, very truly and aptly says—

"The specific appeal to the scriptures of the New Testament to verify or correct current tendencies is gone. The scriptures, so far as they are referred to, are merged in a miscellaneous mass of authorities."<sup>1</sup>

The Church of England at the Reformation refused—and still refuses—to merge the Scriptures in a miscellaneous mass of authorities, and herein is our chief safeguard against error.

The Reformation position on Justification must also be maintained at all costs. It is the secret of spiritual peace, spiritual liberty, spiritual power, and spiritual service. Nothing is so potent in opposition to all Sacerdotal claims as the insistence upon the direct access of the soul to God based on the acceptance of the righteousness which is of God by faith.

<sup>1</sup> *The Body of Christ*, p. 223.

The Reformation principle of the conditional efficacy of the Sacraments must also be maintained. It is our safeguard against materialistic use of those Divine and blessed ordinances. It prevents them from degenerating into fetishes and charms, by associating with them the word of promise to which our faith may cling.

It may, perhaps, be urged that circumstances have changed, and that there is no longer need for a predominance and spiritual perspective to-day identical with that put forth at the Reformation ; but, apart from the fact that human nature has the same needs and risks, Rome to-day boasts her changelessness ; and so long as her claims to exclusiveness in our country are put forth with the same power and pertinacity with which they are now being urged, it will be the wisdom—to say nothing of the necessity—of the Church of England to emphasize with all possible clearness the distinctiveness of the Reformation position as a guarantee of true Catholicity. Professor Sewell, a High Churchman, rightly said—

“ It is our glory and happiness to be Christians ; it is our safeguard and our consolation to be Catholics ; our sad and melancholy duty—a duty we can never abandon till Rome has ceased to work among us—to be Protestants.”

3. By careful adherence to the *true grounds of ecclesiastical fellowship and unity*. It is necessary to emphasize the *true grounds* because it is only too possible to insist upon grounds of Church fellowship which are untrue, and therefore untenable. Let it at once be said that true Churchmen will not for an instant wish lightly to alter or set aside anything that has come down to them as Scriptural, primitive, or useful. With all our hearts we subscribe to the doctrine of Article XXXIV that—

“ Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.”

But while this is so, we must be particularly careful that we base our position on the only safe and clear ground of truth. Although we hold firmly to our own form of government we must ever distinguish between historical fact and Divine law, and must guard against the error and danger of transforming points of Church order into obligations of Divine authority. We will retain what has been handed down to us, and will not depart therefrom without grave and valid reasons ; but if we raise to the position of Divine sanction and order what is only to be found as a matter of Church order and practical utility, we are doing violence to the best

interests of true Catholicity. Any one with any pretence to knowledge of the first three centuries well knows that the precise forms of ministry were not directly ordained of God, but developed out of circumstances in the Church. Only by evolution did episcopacy come into being. Not revelation, but evolution, explains it. Episcopacy arose by evolution from below (i.e. from the presbyterate), not by devolution from above (i.e. from the Apostolate); in this is the true ground of our maintenance of it, and herein, therefore, is one of the secrets of our maintenance of true Catholicity. To hold the exclusive validity of episcopacy is no longer possible for anyone who believes in the New Testament, and has any true idea of what occurred in the first two centuries. English Churchmen rightly believe in and value a succession which is a simple matter of historical fact, and which forms one of the links of connexion with the early ages of the Church, but mere succession through the centuries, whether we call it Episcopalian or Presbyterian, has no power to confer grace or to guarantee the existence of true Christianity. Christianity needs something very much different from this if it is to be preserved in its purity, fullness, and freedom; and for this reason alone, it is absolutely necessary to urge the consideration of the only true and possible grounds upon which to uphold the episcopalian or any other form of Church government. Ministry of some kind is, of course, essential to the Church; but its precise and sole forms and the exact methods of its perpetuation are nowhere taught in Holy Scripture.

The question of true Catholicity had a very practical bearing on the relation of the Church of England to other Communions, and this may perhaps be called,

### 3. **The Message of the Catholicity of the Church of England.**

(a) It has a message for Roman Catholicism. It is not "invincible ignorance" that prevents English Churchmen from submitting to the claims of the Roman Church. We are bold enough to believe that it is due to invincible knowledge. The Church of England believes in Catholicity, but not in Catholicism in the modern sense, whether Roman or Eastern or Anglican. Catholicity is true, necessary, Christian. Catholicism is often false, unnecessary, and unchristian. Catholicity is the development of Apostolic Christianity as represented in and safeguarded by the New Testament. Catholicism is an accretion, a parasitic growth, which tends to obliterate the distinctive principles of New Testament Christianity. Catholicity implies organic unity—the unity of Christ's mystical body in living connexion with the Head—a unity that is spiritual, internal, vital, and essential. Catholicism is not, and never has been, an organic unity, but only an organized, which

frequently means a galvanized, unity—a unity that is external, imposed from without, and for the most part useless and dangerous. The position of the Church of England, with its appeal to the final authority of Scripture and the corroborative testimony of antiquity, is an impregnable position, and affords the best guarantee that the revelation of Jesus Christ to this world can be faithfully preserved, consistently perpetuated, and practically applied to the needs of mankind.

(b) It has a message for other Communion. No one can think that the present divisions of Christendom are pleasing to God or in accordance with His will as revealed in Scripture. The unity of the people of God should therefore occupy a prominent place in the thoughts and prayers of all Christians. Towards the realization of this happy consummation we cannot doubt that the Church of England has an important part to play. By its great principle of the supremacy of Holy Scripture as the final Court of Appeal, it emphasizes that which tends to keep the Church pure and true to God. In its emphasis on antiquity and primitive order as the corroborative tests of truth, our Church conserves all that is good and essential in early Christianity and preserves the true bonds of union and connexion with the Church of the past centuries. The position taken up, as we have seen, by our Reformers in relation to the Continental Churches and the liberal, large-hearted attitude which has been characteristic of the truest Churchmen since that time make our Church, when properly understood and interpreted, a true *via media* for the reconciliation of diverging theories of Christianity. In this will be found, as it has been well said, not compromise for the sake of peace but comprehensiveness for the sake of truth and love. This is the true Catholicity for which the Church of England stands and in the realization of which will be found at once its chief glory and greatest blessing.

## CHAPTER VI

### NONCONFORMITY

AT the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, the Church of England was nominally coterminous with the English people, and for a time any differences of attitude and view were not incompatible with unity inside the Church. But extremes soon begat extremes, and the terrible experiences of the reign of Queen Mary led to a section of Protestants becoming determined to go as



far as possible in opposition to Rome, a determination intensified by their contact with Continental Protestantism during their exile in Mary's reign.

Queen Elizabeth and the authorities of the Church thus found themselves met by a strong band of earnest men, who, while desirous of continuing members of the Church of England, wished for further movement in the direction of extreme Protestantism. This desire was, unfortunately, met by a *non possumus* attitude, confirmed by threats of persecution in default of conformity. It was doubtless true that the seriousness of the times needed a bold and united national front against Roman Catholic designs, and it is also equally true that many of the Puritan objections were trivial and frivolous. At the same time, the policy of Elizabeth and Archbishop Whitgift was neither wise nor true, as the words of so weighty an authority as the late Bishop Creighton amply testify. Speaking of the Elizabethan Church, the Bishop says <sup>1</sup>—

“It tended to lose the appearance of a free and self-governing body, and seemed to be an instrument of the policy of the State. Its pleadings and its arguments lost half their weight because they were backed by coercive authority. The dangerous formula ‘Obey the law’ was introduced into the settlement of questions which concerned the relations of the individual conscience and God.”

The tone and temper of both sides can easily be deplored at this distance of time, the Puritans on the one hand objecting to certain matters of Church discipline which were really of no moment, and on the other hand, their great antagonist, Hooker, seeming to set himself to justify every detail found in the Prayer Book, without any possible modification or exception.

This unyielding spirit on both sides was intensified and deepened in the reigns of James I and Charles I, with the inevitable result that when the Puritan party obtained the upper hand they made short work of the convictions even of moderate Churchmen. The action in particular of James, Charles, and Archbishop Laud led to Episcopacy being confounded with “prelacy,” and the result was that by means of the solemn League and Covenant of 1643 a Presbyterian tyranny was attempted, which was as intolerable in England as the Laudian tyranny had been in Scotland. If only the counsels of men like Leighton and Archbishop Ussher had prevailed later history would have been very different. As it was “the Presbyterians had now succeeded the Laudians, and their intolerance was as great as that of those whom they had supplanted.” <sup>2</sup>

The inevitable reaction followed when Charles II came to the Throne, and the history of the Savoy Conference, and the circum-

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures and Addresses.*

<sup>2</sup> Butler's *Life and Letters of Archbishop Leighton*, p. 192.

stances attending the publication of the Revised Prayer Book of 1662 are sad reading for Churchpeople. The Act of Uniformity demanded subscription to the Prayer Book before it was available to all the clergy, and the result was what has been rightly called "Black Bartholomew's Day" of 1662, when thousands of men like Baxter, Calamy and Manton were driven out of the Church of England, and Nonconformity within the Church became transformed into Dissent outside the Church. Then with still more cruel persecution and legal oppression,<sup>1</sup> the gulf between the two parties became absolutely impassable.

Later efforts at reconciliation failed, and then the Church settled into the comparative torpor of the eighteenth century, when even the great Bishop Butler seems to have despaired of Christianity. But God raised up His chosen witnesses, and by means of Wesley, Whitefield, and the leaders of the Evangelical Church Revival, the pure Gospel was brought back to the nation. The attitude and action of the Church and State authorities at that time resulted in yet another separation from the Church, and Methodism became a fact in the ecclesiastical life of our land.

In the early part of the nineteenth century a movement sprang up, at first mainly connected with the Church of England, with a desire for greater spirituality and simplicity of life and worship. Owing to the strength of these gatherings, which were held in the West of England, the adherents became known as Plymouth Brethren, and it was not long before they separated from the English Church and formed congregations of their own. The "Brethren" have undoubtedly exercised a great influence in connexion with certain aspects of thought and life, especially in relation to Bible study and the Coming of the Lord, but unfortunately their testimony has been largely neutralized by what seems to be an inherent tendency to separation one from another, until now there are so many divisions and sections that it is beyond the power of outsiders, or perhaps indeed themselves, to explain the reasons of these separations.

It is impossible to recount even in summary form the history of the various denominations which are found among us. Suffice it to say that we have the spectacle of a large number of different, and often differing, communions. Of these the most important are—

(1) The Congregationalists, dating from 1580, who hold that each

<sup>1</sup> One Act punished with fines and imprisonments all persons who attended conventicles. Another Act prohibited ministers from residing within five miles of the village or town where they preached, thus cruelly keeping them from the help of friends.

congregation of Christians is independent of the rest so far as government and discipline are concerned.

(2) The Presbyterians, who scarcely differ from the Church of England on any essential doctrine, while in Church government the difference is in the matter of episcopacy.

(3) The Baptists, who, together with a congregational or independent Church polity, usually limit membership to believers baptized by immersion.

(4) The Methodists, whose organization is somewhat akin to that of Presbyterianism, and whose doctrine, with one or two serious exceptions, is not much different from that of the Church of England.

(5) The Brethren, who are divided into two main sections, the Open and the Exclusive, the latter with various coteries each excommunicating all the rest.

(6) The Salvation Army, an organization which was the creation of one man, and which is virtually under a dictatorship. The doctrines are allied to those of the Methodist Churches.

(7) The Quakers, or Society of Friends, founded by George Fox in 1650, as a protest against the formalism and deadness of the Church of that day, but who in the inevitable rebound have gone to the extreme of denying the sacraments and ministry clearly taught in the New Testament. They are active in humanitarian schemes, and are strongly pacifist.

What are we to say to all this from the standpoint of the Church of England? In the first place, we of the English Church should be very careful in the light of past history about charging all Dissenters with being in schism. Our brief review of Anglican Church history since the Reformation surely teaches us that we cannot look back without deep feelings of sorrow and regret at the action of Church authorities from time to time. It is only common fairness to say that a great deal of the Nonconformity and Dissent of the past two hundred and fifty years had been through no fault of their own, and was for the most part excusable and unavoidable. Our truer attitude would be to follow the advice of Bishop Stubbs when he says—

“The initial question is, How and why are they Nonconformists, how and why are they competing communities? The answer, Simply because they, as communities, hold some points so important as to out-weight the advantages of communion with the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

We shall do well to inform ourselves on the points which Nonconformists consider essential to their position, for there is no better way of arriving at a true conclusion than by endeavouring to understand the opinions of those who differ from us.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Stubbs' *Visitation Charges*, p. 28.

We must also bear in mind that a ministry may be historically irregular without being spiritually invalid. This historical and primitive irregularity is undoubtedly true of much Nonconformist ministry, but when we remember how much of Nonconformity is due to past failures of our Church, we shall be wronging the deepest principles of Christianity if we refuse to admit the spiritual validity, efficacy and blessing of their ministrations. We owe to Nonconformity some of our choicest saints and profoundest theologians, and no one who realizes what the Spirit of Christ is can doubt for an instant the spiritual power and blessing to be found in the Nonconformist Churches.

It has been rightly pointed out that Puritan theology is noteworthy for its high and glorious conception of the Church as the body in which the Redeemer lives and rules. It is only when we come to the Roman and so-called Anglo-Catholic conception of the Church that we find a lower ideal and a narrow and ignoble conception of the Body of Christ. What shall we say to the following questions and answers, which come from a Free Church Catechism—

*Q.* What is the Holy Catholic Church ?

*A.* It is that holy society of believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His spirit ; so that though made up of many communions, organized in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet One in Him.

*Q.* What is the essential mark of a true branch of the Catholic Church ?

*A.* The essential mark of a true branch of the Catholic Church is the presence of Christ, through His indwelling Spirit, manifested in holy life and fellowship.

Surely we have here the elements from which may come, in the good providence of God, a mutual understanding and the way to unity.

The Church of England has the power and opportunity to include and emphasize all the essential features for which the various Nonconformist denominations now stand : the presbyterial power of the Presbyterians, the true spiritual congregational independence (without the often accompanying separateness and exclusiveness) of the Congregationalists, the insistence on definite personal relation to God as urged by the Baptists, the fervour of the Methodists, and the love of the Word of God and the earnest expectation of the Lord's Coming, which characterize the true " Brethren."

From all this will rightly come an endeavour to bring about reunion, however far off that consummation may appear at the present moment. No one can help being grieved at " our unhappy divisions," and those who have at heart the best interests of our country and Empire, as well as the higher interests of Christianity, will not rest content with the present state of affairs without doing



something to heal the breaches. What this action will be must of necessity be a matter for careful consideration of all the facts and factors involved. All that we can emphasize now is the importance and absolute necessity of praying and working for true Christian reunion.

At the same time, we of the Church of England have a right to ask the various Nonconformist Churches to consider their part in this matter. Truth is not found on one side only, and reunion will never come by absorption or capitulation on either side. The whole truth is not with one side alone. No one can doubt that the present divisions of Christendom are a stumbling-block to non-Christians, and no one who reads the New Testament teaching on unity can help deploring the tendency to continual division and separation among certain sections of the Protestant world. Sectarianism has been well defined as individualism run mad, and it would be well for Nonconformity if it could realize more than it does of the corporate side of Christianity and the Christian life. The formation and growth of the National Free Church Council and other movements, which need not be here particularized, show that the Nonconformist Churches are becoming alive to this great necessity.

Meanwhile, all true Churchmen will welcome every opportunity of joint action by means of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and other interdenominational (not undenominational) organizations, while every method of united social and temperance work is also to be earnestly utilized. The true and statesmanlike policy of the Church of England will be to keep open the door as wide as possible for reunion with the various Nonconformist Evangelical Churches. They are found side by side with us in various parts of the Mission Field; they represent the vast majority of English-speaking Christian people in the United States of America, where, of course, the term "Nonconformist" does not exist. They are to be found side by side with us in our Dominions, and it may be said that everything that makes for the expansion of the British Empire and the ever-widening influence of the Anglo-Saxon race makes at the same time for the reunion of the various Protestant communities into one great and united Church. Meantime, we should all, and always, remember our Lord's prayer for unity, "That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii. 21), and pray the beautiful prayer of our Accession Service—

"O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred, and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord; that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one

Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

## CHAPTER VII

### *CHURCH PARTIES*

THOSE who held Reformed views in the sixteenth century, while thoroughly agreed in substance, did not all view the truth in the same way, nor was their emphasis on particular aspects of truth exactly the same. These views, though diverse, were not really divergent, and men like Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, Rogers, Jewel, Bacon, Philpot, Parker, Hooker, and Whitgift, were essentially one in attitude while individually different in temperament and mental outlook. This diversity of view continued in the seventeenth century, and additional types were represented by such men as Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, Reynolds, and Cosin. Later on still we find men of yet another type, like Barrow, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries continued this remarkable and welcome variety of Church life and thought. These tendencies are sometimes described as Schools of Thought; but since Thought necessarily influences life, perhaps the best way of regarding them is to think of them as each emphasizing certain aspects of man's relation to God. Sometimes this relation is viewed mainly from the corporate side, the Church being emphasized as the expression of God's revelation in Christ; at other times the individual and personal aspect of the believer's relation to God is emphasized with its message of personal accountability and personal liberty; while yet again, by others the relation of the Church to national life and social progress is brought into view. These Schools of Thought, or, if we will, these Church Parties have thus existed from the time when the Church of England took its present form and colour at the Reformation, and they will undoubtedly continue to exist until the end of time. There is no reason whatever why this should not be, for there can be Parties in the Church of England without party spirit, even though we naturally have our preference in one direction or another.

One question, however, emerges out of all these differences of thought and party, and that is as to the limitations of difference within the Church of England. These varieties of view must of necessity be compatible with loyalty to the general position of the

Church of England, and such was undoubtedly the case until the rise of what is known as the Tractarian Movement in the early part of the nineteenth century under Newman, R. H. Froude, and others. This Movement was nothing less than an effort to make out that the Church of England was after all not essentially different from the Church of Rome. Newman's Tract XC marks the most prominent attempt in this direction. He endeavoured to explain the XXXIX Articles in such a way as to make them virtually identical with the teaching of the Church of Rome. But facts were too stubborn for him, and this non-natural, or rather un-natural, interpretation did not satisfy him or any one else, and it was not long before Newman and others saw the impossibility of their position, and went over to the Church of Rome. Unfortunately, however, there has remained in the Church of England to the present day a large party who hold essential Roman doctrines, and are observing Roman practices in English Churches. This party is in no sense to be regarded as the lineal successors of the High Churchmen of the seventeenth century, and they are also to be distinguished from those High Churchmen of the nineteenth century who were absolutely opposed to Roman Catholic doctrines and ritual.

The differences between loyal members of the Church of England up to the time of the Tractarian Movement were differences of tint or shade, but not differences of colour, and no one would dream of desiring to make the Church of England narrower than the limits of the Prayer Book and Articles, with their true and adequate notes of Catholicity. It was this generous and broad position that was set up by our Reformers, and the same breadth must at all costs be maintained by their descendants. But it is quite another thing when doctrines and practices are introduced into the Church of England which were cast out by our Reformers, and errors taught and practised in our Holy Communion in opposition to which the Reformers laid down their lives. Such a state of affairs calls for the union of all "sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England," summons them to rally round the standard of true Catholicity, and to do everything that is possible to maintain unimpaired the genuine Anglican tradition in its purity and power.

In the *Life of Mr. Gladstone*<sup>1</sup> we have the record of a remarkable conversation with one of the early Tractarian leaders, who, with the utmost frankness, declared that "the ulterior object of the Tractarian Movement was reunion with the Church of Rome as the See of Peter," and meanwhile that "the end was to be reached through Catholicizing the minds of the members of the Church of England."

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 309 f.

It is essential that the true position of the Church of England should be borne in mind, and the errors of the Tractarian and modern Ritualistic Movement kept in view. This Movement does not represent a legitimate development of anything to be found in the Church of England since the sixteenth century, it rather represents an alien growth from germs that have been placed in the Church of England from the time of the rise of John Henry Newman and his School.

It is well known that there are six Ceremonies that the Ritualistic party insist on as of the essence of their position. These are Pre-Reformation Vestments, Eastward Position at Holy Communion, Incense, Altar Lights, Ceremonial mixing of Water with the Wine, and Wafer Bread. There are three simple facts about all these which can be tested and verified by everyone : (1) Not one of them can be found in the New Testament, our supreme authority (Articles VI and XX). (2) Not one of them can be found used in the Church of the first five centuries. (3) Not one of them can be found ordered or warranted by the Prayer Book, Articles, and Canons of the English Church. In view of these simple facts the position of the Church of England is clear and unquestionable, and the duty of her true sons patent to all men. There is such a thing as a definite, general Anglican tradition, which amid all differences has been maintained ever since the Reformation. Every true Churchman who loves his Church, and longs to see her an ever-increasing power in the land, must grieve over the existence of so much that is entirely foreign to her genius : the use of unauthorized ceremonial, services, prayers, and manuals by men who have solemnly promised to use the Prayer Book, "and none other," in the public Services ; the deliberate and frankly-confessed rejection of the Thirty-nine Articles ; and the unconcealed teaching of doctrines essentially one with those of the Roman Church.

These circumstances are a clear call to unity among all loyal members of the Church of England, and it is essential that those Churchmen who are content with and rejoice in the Anglican traditions and in the Prayer Book as it is, should emphasize their essential unity, and should unite boldly on the basis of a liberal and historical Protestantism, combined with a loyal, Scriptural, and Anglican Catholicity. It ought to be possible, and we believe it is possible, for all truly Moderate Churchmen to unite on the basis of the Prayer Book and Articles ; and in this union will be found our protection against the inroads of views which are as opposed to the true position of the Church of England as darkness is to sunlight.



CHAPTER VIII <sup>1</sup>*MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD*

CORRECT views on the Christian Ministry are vital to a proper conception of the Gospel of Christ as well as to a true view of the position of the Church of England. We have already considered the positive teaching of our Church on this subject, but in view of certain modern controversies it is of the utmost importance that we should be perfectly clear as to the essential character of the Christian Ministry, more particularly in its relation to Priesthood.

In the Old Testament, and also in the New, the fact of a "ministry" is clearly recorded. In the former the ministry consists chiefly of two orders or classes of men—the priests and the prophets, each with its own sphere more or less clearly defined, and with a work of great importance and absolute necessity, because of divine appointment.

The essence of the priesthood was the representation of man to God (Heb. v. 1) ; the essence of the prophetic office was the representation of God to man. Anything else done by priest or prophet was accidental and additional, and not a necessary part of his office. The essential work of the priest was expressed in sacrifice and intercession, and may be summed up in the word "mediator." The essential work of the prophet was expressed in revelation and instruction, and may be summed up in the word "ambassador." The priesthood meant propitiation ; the prophetic office revelation. The priest was concerned with the way of man to God ; the prophet with the will of God to man. The two offices were thus complementary and, together, fulfilled all the requirements of the relationship between God and man.

The ministry of the New Testament is equally clear and undoubted, but with certain great and notable differences. As we have already observed, there is absolutely nothing about a special order or class of men called priests. The only priesthood, apart from our Lord's, is the spiritual priesthood of all believers. There is, however, much that answers to the essential ministry of the Old Testament prophet, though with this difference, that ministry in the New Testament is not confined to any one class of believers : it is the privilege and duty of all. Diversities of gifts in that ministry there are, but ministry generally and of some kind is for all. Indeed the various gifts are for the express purpose of "equip-

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this chapter was delivered as an address and afterwards published in pamphlet form.

ping the saints for their work of ministering " (Eph. iv. 12, Greek and R.V.).

Whether we think of the ministry of the priest or of the prophet, it is clear from the New Testament that there is no class of believers to whom spiritual functions exclusively belong as of absolute and divine appointment. What is required for "decency and order" is quite another question, and though important and essential, is assuredly secondary to the above-named fundamental principle of the New Testament.

From these differences between the Old and New Testaments the subject of this chapter emerges, viz.: "The Silence of the New Testament as to any Special Order of Priests, and its Insistence on the Ministry of the Word."

### **I. The Silence of the New Testament as to any Special Order of Priests.**

(a) This silence is a simple fact. There are twenty-seven books, and not a single reference can be found to a special human priesthood. But this conveys only a slight idea of the strength of the evidence. The New Testament is not so much a volume as a library, and its evidence consists of several independent parts, and has a cumulative force. Let us examine seven of these representative and distinctive parts and notice the result. (1) There are the instructions of our Lord to His disciples and apostles in the four Gospels, but not a word about a special priesthood. (2) There is the first book of general Church history, the Acts of the Apostles, but not a hint of such a priesthood. (3) There is the first detailed picture of one particular Apostolic Church in the Epistles to the Corinthians, but not a sign of any such priesthood. (4) There are the two great doctrinal Epistles for Gentile Christians, Romans and Ephesians, but no instruction whatever as to such a priesthood. (5) There is the great doctrinal Epistle for Jewish Christians, Hebrews, but nothing in it except our Lord's priesthood. (6) There are the three Epistles of pastoral and ecclesiastical instructions, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, but not a word of any special priesthood. (7) There are the mature writings of the two great Apostles of the Circumcision, St. Peter and St. John, but no trace whatever of this priesthood. This evidence taken separately in its parts is striking, but taken as a whole it is cumulative and absolutely overwhelming.

This silence is a striking fact. There are twenty-seven books, covering a period of at least forty to fifty years, referring to the foundation and early history of the Church amid differences of place, country, race, capacity, and conditions of life. Yet there is no provision for a special order of priesthood. It is also a striking

silence, because (with one possible exception) all the writers were Jews, and, as such, steeped in sacerdotal ideas, language, and associations from their earliest childhood. The Apostles used sacrificial and sacerdotal language on several occasions to describe certain elements and aspects of the Gospel, notably St. Paul in Rom. xv. 16, where he speaks of his preaching as his sacred and sacrificial service, and his Gentile converts as his sacrificial offering. But this, as the whole context shows, is manifestly spiritual and symbolical in meaning, and is at once descriptive and illustrative of his work as a "prophet" or preacher of the Gospel. Not one of the New Testament writers ever used the word *ιερεὺς*, a sacrificing priest, to distinguish a Christian minister from a layman. How can we account for the avoidance of this familiar term?

Bishop Westcott is recorded to have observed in some of his lectures at Cambridge that this avoidance was the nearest approach he knew to verbal inspiration. Some of us would venture to go a step further, and claim it as an unmistakable example of the superintending control of the Holy Ghost in the composition of the Scriptures. Humanly speaking, the chances against avoiding the use of *ιερεὺς* in this connexion were as ten thousand to one. Indeed, we may almost say that to refuse to explain this avoidance by the guiding of the Holy Ghost is to require for its explanation what is virtually a miracle of human thought, foresight, and mutual prearrangement among several writers.

If it be said that the question is one not of words but of things, we reply with Bishop Lightfoot, "This is undeniable; but words express things, and the silence of the Apostles still requires an explanation."<sup>1</sup> Neither the word nor the thing can be discovered in the New Testament.

This silence is a significant fact. It is what Bishop Lightfoot calls "the eloquent silence of the apostolic writings."<sup>2</sup> There is no mention because there is no place for it and no need of it in the New Testament. In the Jewish economy a mediatorial priesthood was necessary because of alienation from God, because sin was not put away, because the way to God was not open. But now sin has been put away, the way into the holiest is manifest, and for this Christ, our Divine Priest, is all and in all. This is the burden of the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews; the one and only priesthood, inviolable, undelegated (*ἀνυπόβαραν*, Heb. vii. 24), of our Lord. Christ's priesthood is unique, perfect, and permanent, and as long as He is priest there is no room for and no need of any other mediator.

This silence, as to a special human priesthood, shows that such

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Philippians*; *Essays*, p. 264.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

a priesthood is irreconcilable with the letter and spirit of Apostolic Christianity. In this respect "Christianity stands apart from all the other religions." It is the "characteristic distinction of Christianity,"<sup>1</sup> to have no such provision. Where there is no repeated offering there is no need of an altar; where there is no altar there is no sacrifice; where there is no sacrifice there is, there can be, no priest. The benefits of the sacrifice once for all offered are now being continually bestowed by Christ and appropriated by the penitent believer without any human mediator because "the kingdom of Christ . . . has no sacerdotal system."<sup>2</sup>

Of late, however, the argument has been frequently used that ministerial priesthood, or the priesthood of the ministry, is only the universal priesthood of believers expressed through their representatives, that as the human body acts through its members, so the Church as the body of Christ acts through the ministry as its instruments, and that, consequently, when the "priest" is exercising his ministerial functions it is really the Church acting through him.

To this line of argument the answer seems clear: (1) There is an entire silence in the New Testament as to this special, and, as it were, localized priesthood. Surely, if the ministry had been regarded as exercising a priesthood distinguishable from the priesthood of all believers, or regarded as the priesthood of the Church specialized, it would have been necessary to show that this ministerial priesthood existed in the Christian Church. Yet there are no priestly functions associated with the Christian ministry as such in the New Testament. The priesthood of all believers is inherent in their relation to Christ. This is the Divine warrant for it, and there is no such warrant for any narrower or modified form of it.

(2) Is it not at least unsafe, even if not perilous, to base such a novel and far-reaching claim on a metaphor, the figure of the human body?

(3) The Scriptural use of this metaphor never differentiates between the spiritual body and its instruments, but only between members and members.

(4) The modern use of the metaphor now in question proves too much, for while in the natural body *certain members alone* can act and "minister" in certain ways, as the hand does in one way and the foot in another, in the Scripture idea of the body of Christ *each member* has real "priestly" functions. "That which every joint supplieth" (Eph. iv. 16). These differences of function are only of degree, not of kind, and do not constitute the ministry a special and localized priesthood, a position which would involve a difference of kind.

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Philippians; Essays*, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.



(5) This idea of a ministerial priesthood, as expressive of the universal priesthood, is a novel and significant departure from the older and still generally accepted view of those who hold the sacerdotalism of the Christian ministry. It represents an almost entire shifting of the ground. The prevalent conception of the priesthood of the ministry has been that of an order of men in direct touch with Christ, and, as such, acting *on* the body rather than *for* it. But the new use of the metaphor really implies that the instruments act *for* the body and *through* the body, in the sense of not being *immediately* in contact with the Head. The older sacerdotalism maintains that the priesthood receives and represents "an attribute of grace distinct from" that received by the Church, "by virtue of which grace, men are brought into such relationship with God that through this instrumentality they obtain the promised blessings of the covenant under which they live."<sup>1</sup> But this view involves much more than a concentration of the priesthood of the whole of the Church in a part of it. It represents another line of grace different from the general one in kind as well as in degree. Yet Scripture knows nothing of two separate lines of grace, one from the Head direct to the Church and the other from the Head to the ministry.

The older and newer views of the priestly character of the ministry are therefore incompatible, and sacerdotalists cannot have both. It is impossible on any true analogy to distinguish between the spiritual body and its ministerial organs in such a way as to make the organs the *instruments* of the body, according to the new view, and yet in *authority over it*, according to the old view. Upholders of ministerial priesthood must choose between these positions, though for neither of them is there any warrant or authority in the Word of God.

(6) The functions of the Christian ministry, as such, and considered in themselves, are those of a personal medium, not of a priestly mediator; they are prophetic, not priestly, they are exercised on behalf of Christ rather than on behalf of the Church, and represent the Head rather than the body. And even so far as they may be said in certain aspects to represent the Church, the functions are "representative and not vicarial."<sup>2</sup> In short, the essential idea of the ministry is *διακονία* not *ιεράτευμα*, service not sacerdotalism, and it can never be too frequently asserted that the fundamental conception of the Christian ministry is that it represents God to the Church rather than the Church to God, that it is prophetic and not priestly. The phrase "ministerial priesthood"

<sup>1</sup> Canon T. T. Carter, *On the Priesthood*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 267.

is really a contradiction of the essential character of the New Testament ministry. If we take away "priesthood" from the sacerdotal idea of ministry, the very foundation of sacerdotalism vanishes. On the other hand, if we add the idea of "priesthood" to the New Testament conception of the ministry, the very essence of the Christian ministry becomes transformed.

(7) It is scarcely too much to say that this new idea or application of "ministerial priesthood" is the refuge of men who have been driven from the older position by the logic of Scripture truth concerning the priesthood of all believers, the uniqueness of our Lord's priesthood, and the entire absence of any essentially sacerdotal functions (such as offering sacrifice) from the New Testament conception of the Christian minister. In so far, therefore, as the new view implies a modification of, or rather a departure from the older sacerdotal view, it may be welcomed as at least a significant change, but it cannot be accepted as a means of bringing back and preserving the old view. As already stated, the two positions are incompatible, and if the new be true the old was false. But, in fact, neither the new nor the old view is Scriptural, and it may be stated fearlessly that there is no function or office of the Christian *priesthood* which cannot be exercised by any and every individual believer in Christ of either sex.

The truth is best expressed by saying that Christianity *is* (not *has*) a priesthood. Differences of function in the Christian *ministry* there are, but in the Christian *priesthood* there are not. So we return to our point and call renewed attention to the simple, striking, and significant silence of the New Testament as to any new and special order of priests.

Side by side with this silence as to any new order of priests, we find—

## 2. The Insistence of the New Testament on the Ministry of the Word.

(a) The New Testament emphasizes the nature of the ministry. The ministry of the New Testament is twofold, for evangelization and edification; the ministry to the sinner and to the saint. There are at least seven series of titles associated with the ministry which show the character and necessity of it in the Church. The minister is a herald (*κήρυξ* and cognates), a messenger of good news (*εὐαγγελιστής* and cognates), a witness (*μάρτυς* and cognates), an ambassador (*πρεσβεύω*), a servant *διάκονος* and cognates), a shepherd (*ποιμήν*), a steward (*οἰκονόμος* and cognates), and a teacher (*διδάσκαλος* and cognates). The variety and fullness of reference plainly show the paramount importance placed on the ministry of the Word.

The New Testament emphasizes the message of the ministry.

There are two phrases that sum up this message, one referring chiefly to its relation to God and the other to its relation to man. "The Word" is the message as it expresses the mind of God. "The Gospel" is the message as it describes its destination for and acceptableness to man. Associated with "the Word" we find at least seven series of titles of the message: the Word of God, the Word of Christ, the Word of the Lord; the Word of reconciliation, the Word of salvation, the Word of grace, the Word of righteousness, the Word of truth, the Word of life. There are also seven series connected with "the Gospel": the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the grace of God, the Gospel of salvation, the Gospel of peace, the Gospel of the kingdom, the Gospel of the glory of God.

These various aspects, so clear, so full, so important, may all be summed up in three well-known passages: "It is I"; "It is finished"; "It is written." The Person of Christ, the Work of Christ, the Word of Christ. Salvation provided, wrought, and assured. This is essentially the complete yet remarkably varied message of the ministry of Christianity.

The New Testament emphasizes the purpose of the ministry. The ministry of the Word is intended to bring God and man face to face—God revealing, man responding. It claims to do for man all that he needs or can need. Regeneration, sanctification, edification, glorification, are all associated with the Word of God, and at every step of the Christian life the ministry of that Word finds its place and power.

This purpose becomes realized in the response of man through faith. The Word of God and faith are correlatives, and faith is emphasized in the New Testament because it is the only, as it is the adequate, response to the revelation of God. Faith brings the soul into direct contact with God, and the result is "righteousness through faith." The Gospel is the power of God to salvation, because in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith, having faith as its correlative and channel from first to last (Rom. i. 16, 17). Faith responds to God's Word and appropriates Christ as God's righteousness "for us" for justification, and God's righteousness "in us" for sanctification.

This is the New Testament "ministry of the Word," and it is ministerial and instrumental, not mediatorial and vicarious. Who are we "but ministers" through whom men "believe"?

And this ministry is a permanent element. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Among St. Paul's concluding exhortations was, "Preach the Word." St. Peter's last teaching emphasizes the Word of God. St. John's closing writings exhort to

"abiding in the Truth." And our Church indicates its meaning by speaking of Ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

The permanent ministry of the Word is a threefold guarantee to the Church—

(1) It is a guarantee of the purity of the Church. Whenever it has been neglected, the course of the Church has been deflected; and whenever, as at the Reformation, this has been predominant, her purity has been restored. This is the explanation of every backsliding, the means of every recovery. There must ever be in this sense "a reversion to type."

(2) It is a guarantee of the progress of the Church. Whenever it has been honoured there has been extension; whenever it has been neglected, stagnation. Missionary work at home and abroad finds its definite trend and full impetus by the ministry of the Word.

(3) It is a guarantee of the power of the Church. As a protection against all foes and for the good of all friends, let us honour the ministry of the Word. There is no weapon Rome fears more than the Word of God. It was with a sure spiritual perception that Luther emphasized justification by faith as the *articulus aut stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*, "the article of a standing or falling Church," and it is with an equally sure instinct from another standpoint that Rome sees in this doctrine her most powerful enemy, and assails it with the most virulent opposition. Not because of the supposed danger to morality through "Solifidianism" (salvation by faith only), but because it cuts at the root of all her priestly power, Rome wages warfare against justification by faith. This truth brings the soul into direct, conscious, blessed, satisfying contact and union with Christ, and thereby dispenses at once and for ever with a human mediator. Christ is thereby present and no longer merely represented.

The ministry of the Word, too, is our great power against all erroneous views of the Christian ministry which exist within the professed membership of our own Church. In proportion as the sacerdotal element is emphasized, the ministry of the Word is ignored. Exalt the priest and you depose the teacher, for the inherent tendency of sacerdotalism is directly opposed to that of the preaching and teaching ministry of the Word of God. Let Church people be saturated with the truth of Holy Scripture, and they will find in it their power against all Sacerdotalism.

The ministry of the Word is also the true power against all worldliness in the Church and congregation. If the standard of the Word be uplifted and pressed on heart and conscience, all worldly devices and elements in Church life will fall away and die. The message of the Word for holiness of heart and life will soon settle



questionable methods of Church finance, Church life, and Church work. And all this will be so because of its power to "edify" the believer. More and better Bible-classes, more expository teaching in sermons, more individual meditation, study and teaching of the Word will soon have its blessed effects in the individual and congregational life.

## CHAPTER IX

### *CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION*

THE words "Confession" and "Absolution" are often upon our lips, and, properly understood, they are of great importance and, of course, essentially Christian. But they are liable to great misunderstanding and misconstruction, and there is constant and pressing need of careful consideration. The only true consideration is that which is conducted in the clear light, and under the constant guidance of Holy Scripture. "What saith the Lord?" is the supreme question.

**1. The Teaching of Scripture.**—There is a threefold Confession and Absolution in Scripture.

(a) Personal Confession to God. This is an essential point in the Christian life. It is a confession that must be habitual, thorough, compulsory. The Absolution for this comes direct from God through His Word, applied by His Spirit.

(b) Public Confession before the Church. Sin often relates to others and affects them. Such was the sin of Achan (Joshua vii), of the Corinthian Christian (1 Cor. v.), and that referred to in Matt. xviii. 15-17. We see this illustrated in the Mission Field to-day, when suspension and public confession are often found necessary and valuable. We do not now possess this discipline in the Church of England, and its absence is regretted in the Communion Service. The Absolution following this form of Confession is given by the Christian body acting through the representative minister when receiving back the penitent.

(c) Reciprocal Confession among Christians. We find this in Jas. v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This is a matter of Christian fellowship and friendship. It is beautifully simple, has nothing official in it, but is part of Christian intercourse. It is also wonderfully helpful, whether for relief in consciousness of sin or reparation

to a brother wronged. The Absolution here comes through prayer to God.

There is no trace of any other aspects of Confession but these in Scripture.

(1) What then is the meaning of Matt. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 18 ? We should notice that the reference is to *things*, not persons : " Whatsoever." It refers therefore to Church discipline, not to the absolution of persons. " Binding and loosing " was a well-known Jewish form for " prohibiting " and " permitting," and the passage refers to the power of the Church or Christian body to draw up its own rules of discipline.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Does not John xx. 22 f. refer to Confession ? On this we note—

(a) The words were spoken to the whole body of Christians (cf. Luke xxiv. 33), and not to the Apostles alone. We must remember that the two from Emmaus (who were not Apostles) were of the company, so that whatever the passage means, " Ye " includes all and applies to all.

(b) A comparison of the other Gospels will show that the words are part of the general commission to the whole Church as there represented, to declare the Gospel, and the terms on which the Gospel could be received. By a familiar figure of speech, " remitting " and " retaining " are put for declaring remitted or retained.

(c) The word rendered " remit " is the usual word for " forgive," and is always so rendered except in this place. Yet no Christian literally *forgave* sins. They declared God's forgiveness.

(d) And this is the use made of it in the Acts. For " remitting " sins they preached God's Gospel ; for " retaining " sins they warned of God's punishment, as in the case of Simon Magus in Acts viii. No auricular confession is to be found there, but simply the declaration of God's terms. As to Church discipline, it is committed to the Church and not to the ministry, and in all matters of Church discipline ministers are but the mouthpieces and representatives of the whole Church. To support the modern view of priestly absolution, there ought to be added to this passage some words limiting the power to ministers, and also words *transmitting* the power on and on. Even if we were to grant all that some understand the passage to mean, we should still need to show that the persons had *authority* or *power* to say the words to anyone else *with the same result*.

(3) Is there anything in 2 Cor. ii. 10 ? " To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also : for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ." But this has no reference to the point before us.

<sup>1</sup> See *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. " Power of the Keys."

(a) It refers to sins against the Church and against St. Paul.

(b) If the Church's "priests" at Corinth had power to absolve and did absolve, there could have been nothing left for St. Paul to absolve.

(c) And the word "forgive" (*χαρίζομαι*) shows that the offences were against the Church and St. Paul. Sin against God does not need the forgiveness of *man*, but of God.

We return therefore to our position and say that the three forms of Confession mentioned above are the only ones found in Holy Scripture.

**2. The Teaching of the Church of England.**—It is necessary to remember the great principle laid down in Article VI about the warrant of Holy Scripture for essential doctrine. The Church of England must herself stand this test.

(a) There are Confession and Absolution in the ordinary Services—

(1) At Morning and Evening Prayer there is the General Confession, with an Absolution in terms of a Declaration.

(2) There is the Confession in the Holy Communion Service, of a deeper and fuller character, with an Absolution in the form of a Prayer. It is noteworthy that Absolution as a prayer is the oldest form.

(b) There are Confession and Absolution in special cases—

(1) In the first address at Holy Communion, after explaining the meaning and stating the conditions of Holy Communion, we read these words—

"therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution."

This is clearly an exceptional case, and not to be the rule. We should note the description: "Discreet and learned Minister of God's Word" (not Priest). Further, he is to "open his grief," i.e. the particular need that troubles him—not all his sins; and then "by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution," i.e. by the application of Scripture to the special need. In this sense every true minister frequently gives absolution; indeed, we may say, that every true Christian in touch with souls does the same. And to show that this is the true and only meaning of the Prayer Book, we have only to compare the partially Reformed Prayer Book of 1549 to see the difference. Auricular Confession and Absolution were therein prescribed with a form of Absolution. All this was swept away in 1552 and never restored.

(2) In the Office for Visitation of the Sick—

" Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences. And by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

On this we note—(a) It is special and exceptional, "if . . . if." (b) "Power to His *Church*," i.e. not to the Ministry only. Where do we find this "power left"? Only in Matt. xviii. 18 and John xx. 22 f., and these, we have seen, refer to Church discipline and the Gospel. The reference must be to these, and their already-ascertained meaning in the New Testament necessarily determines their meaning in the Prayer Book. (c) After the words of Absolution there is actually a prayer for forgiveness: "Impute not unto him his former sins." Yet if they are already absolved, this is unnecessary. (d) The form is optional; the minister need not use it at all. It is the only form in the Prayer Book which is optional.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, therefore, that we have here a combination of the teaching of Matt. xviii. 18 and John xx. 22, 23. The *declaration* refers to sins against the Church (Matt. xviii). The *prayer* before and after refers to sins against God (John xx). As against God, pardon is asked for even though the penitent has been absolved. As against the Church, the restoration to Church membership is referred to as an accomplished fact. This latter fact, and this only, is what Absolution has bestowed, and so the prayer is not to *restore* "this sick member to the unity of the Church," but "*preserve and continue*" him in that to which by the ministerial act he has already been restored. (e) It is very remarkable that this whole passage was left in by the very men who struck out Auricular Confession and Absolution in the Holy Communion Office.

The true interpretation, therefore, is that it represents an extreme and special case of sins in relation to God and the Church. It is the exercise at once of the commission to preach the Gospel and also of Church discipline by its representative minister.

(f) What is even more remarkable is that while this provision was retained in the Prayer Book of 1552, the Rubric was significantly altered. In 1549 it ran—

"The priest shall absolve him after this form, and *the same form of absolution shall be used in all private confessions.*"

In 1552 the italicised words were removed. This shows clearly that the Church of England abolished the system of Auricular Confession. At the same time it shows what the retention of this provision really means.

(c) There is the Ordination Service.

On this we note—(1) The word "Priest" means here as elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> Canon 67.



“Presbyter” or “Elder.” (2) The use of John xx. 22 f. is clearly equivalent to its meaning in the New Testament, neither more nor less. It is a particular application of the General Commission to the one about to be ordained. The Church fulfils the Commission mainly through her officers, according to our Lord’s words. (3) And it should be borne in mind that no Levitical priest ever had the work of Absolution as part of his necessary duty. The priest represented man to God. It was the prophet who represented God to man, and as absolution is God’s message to man, it is the work of a prophet, and the Christian prophet is the preacher who declares the Gospel of Christ. (4) This form was never used in Ordinations earlier than the twelfth century.

That this is the meaning can be proved from the writings of those Reformers who drew up the Service.<sup>1</sup>

We may therefore sum up by remarking—(1) No Auricular Confession and Absolution can be found in the Prayer Book or any of the formularies of the Church of England. The Prayer Book of 1549 arranged for it, but the Reformed Book of 1552 purposely omitted it, and it has never been restored. Again we see that omission is prohibition. (2) The Church throws the responsibility on the individual in relation to God. This was one characteristic of the Reformation. This is the meaning of Confession and Absolution being prefixed in Daily Service, and of the special emphasis laid on personal preparation for Holy Communion in that Service. (3) Let us be careful with the Prayer Book and read it in the light of two great principles: the supremacy of Scripture and the well-known views of the compilers. We have to derive our doctrine from Scripture, not to make up our mind first and then go to Scripture for Confirmation.

### **3. Why the Scripture and Prayer Book Methods of Confession and Absolution are sufficient.**

Anything more, or otherwise would be utterly erroneous.

There is no special class called priests to interpose between God and man. The practice of Auricular Confession is not found in the early Church for several centuries. It is part of the penitential system of Rome, which is of a much later growth. Secret and Auricular Confession was not imposed as an Article of Faith by the Church of Rome until A.D. 1215, at the Fourth Council of Lateran.

Anything more would be positively dangerous.

(1) It is dangerous to the one confessing. It tends to keep the soul a spiritual invalid, debilitating the mind, weakening the moral fibre, giving crutches where there should be a Christian walk in

<sup>1</sup> On the whole subject, see *Confession and Absolution*, by Bishop Drury.

newness and vigour of life. In moral fibre, spiritual strength, nobility of character, the Scriptural system produces men and women infinitely superior to the system of Rome.

(2) It is dangerous to the one receiving confession. He is brought into positions which are neither safe nor healthy for his spiritual life. And the system interposes an influence in the home which is unnatural, un-Christian, and perilous.

Anything more would be absolutely unnecessary.

There are three doctrines of Christianity that meet, and more than meet, the supposed need of Auricular Confession and priestly Absolution.

(1) Justification by Faith. This gives us our perfect standing before God. We are "accepted in the Beloved": we can go to God at all times, with no one between us; we can tell Him everything, and receive perfect and immediate Absolution.

"The kingdom of Christ has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. To Him immediately he is responsible, and from him directly he obtains pardon and draws strength." <sup>1</sup>

(2) The Indwelling of Christ. This gives us our fellowship with God, and in that is abiding peace, blessed rest, and glorious communion.

(3) Assurance, or Knowledge of Eternal Life. This gives us our confidence in God, and in this we rest and trust and go on our way rejoicing. These three make us right with God and keep us right. If we sin, we can get right with God at once by confession and trust, and the presence of God gives peace and power and perfect satisfaction.

"Then all is peace and light,  
My soul within.  
Then shall I walk with Thee,  
The loved Unseen.  
Leaning on Thee, my God,  
Guided along the road,  
Nothing between."

## CHAPTER X

### INFANT BAPTISM

THE general position on the subject of the Baptism of children has already been considered from the positive point of view, but owing

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Essay on the Christian Ministry, Commentary on Philippians*, p. 181.

to the prevalence of controversy it is necessary to consider the subject still further, and to seek more particularly for the reasons why our Church says, "the Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ" (Article XXVII). This language, at once clear and yet reserved, indicates the true way of looking at the subject, as one "most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

We have already seen that the meaning of Baptism is God's designation or consecration of the one baptized for the purpose of entering into union with Him in a life of discipleship. The great commission of our Lord was, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them," and as the term "disciple" means a "learner," it is obvious that children are rightly included under this description.

Before proceeding to give reasons for this position, it is necessary to remove one misconception which prevails very widely about the question of Baptism. It is urged by some that Baptism is the Divinely appointed opportunity of confessing Christ and of making profession of faith in Him. It is necessary to meet this assertion with the utmost plainness, and to say that not a single passage in the New Testament connects Baptism with the confession of Christ. When it is remembered that Baptism is brought before us in the New Testament from the Divine side, and that it symbolizes a Divine act, not a human, it is obvious that any association of it with confession of Christ is quite out of the question. Confession of Christ rightly covers the whole life and is not to be limited, even in its initial aspect, to one particular rite. If, then, any sensitive conscience has been troubled with a sense of unfaithfulness and disloyalty to Christ because it has not confessed Him in Baptism, such an one ought to be reassured at once by the fact that challenges contradiction, that no single passage of Scripture associates Baptism with the confession of Christ, so as to make confession an essential part of the rite. If in any circumstances, especially in the Mission Field, the profession of faith arises out of the act of Baptism, it is to be regarded as accidental or due to local conditions. Certainly it is no part of the original purpose and meaning of the Divine Ordinance.

We now proceed to give reasons why the children of Christian parents should be baptized, and their Baptism considered as "most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

1. There is a very much deeper question than, Should Infants be baptized? It is as to the precise **relation of unconscious childhood to the Atonement of Christ**. Let us suppose the birth of twins, and that one child dies shortly after birth; we feel

no doubt whatever about the spiritual position of that infant in relation to our Lord. But what about the moral and spiritual status of the other child who happens to live? Is his relation to Christ any less assured? Does the fact of dying alter the spiritual or moral state of a child? Surely the truth is that both these children and all children are included in the great atoning Sacrifice, and really belong to the Lord Jesus Christ until they deliberately and consciously refuse to have Him as their personal Saviour and King. This great spiritual fact is at the root of the practice of Infant Baptism. It is our testimony to the blessed and glorious fact that childhood belongs to Christ and has its share in the great redemption. The fundamental truth is that we baptize the child, not in order to make it Christ's, but because it already belongs to Him by the *purchase* of His Sacrifice on Calvary. "It is evident that children are brought to Baptism not in the first instance to make God gracious to them, but because He is gracious to them."<sup>1</sup> It would be very remarkable if our Lord in His plan of mercy and love for the human race (half of which dies in infancy) had made no place for unconscious children, and had ignored them entirely until they are no longer children but adults, with, it may be, experience of sin and wandering before experiencing His love and grace.

2. In keeping with this, we find **the relation of God as the Father of unconscious childhood** declared as early as the time of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7). There God pledged Himself to be the God of Abraham and his seed, and this attitude of Divine Fatherhood thus revealed has never yet been altered or modified throughout the ages. Those who object to Infant Baptism may be asked to show any proof from Scripture that God has ever modified or altered His attitude to little children.

3. As a proof of this Divine attitude **the ordinance of Circumcision** was given by God to Abraham as a pledge and seal of the Divine word. It should be remembered that circumcision was observed ages before the time of Moses; it was associated with the covenant of God to Abraham, which was not a covenant of works, but of faith. Our Lord Himself tells us that circumcision was not "of Moses, but of the fathers" (John vii. 22). Circumcision was first of all used of adults in the person of Abraham, and its meaning is given to us by St. Paul. "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 11). Circumcision was also used for unconscious childhood, as to which it could not be the seal of an already existing faith. Thus the meaning of circumcision was naturally modified when applied to children, though in both

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany, *The Prayer Book and the Christian Life*, p. 116.



cases circumcision was associated with the Covenant of Grace. It is therefore entirely inadequate to limit the rite of circumcision to the Mosaic Covenant, and to speak of it as merely the mark of Israelitish nationality and fleshly descent. In the case of Abraham and his household it is distinctly spoken of in connexion with the Covenant of Grace. Abraham's own faith was thereby sealed, and in the case of Isaac, circumcision was the pledge and promise of God's Word which, by his real unity with Abraham his father, should in due course become true to the son. In like manner Baptism to an adult Christian is the seal of an already existing faith, but to the little children of such an adult it is the pledge and seal of Covenant blessings which are assured to the believer and his seed. The analogy is therefore exact and complete, and the necessary modification of meaning and application in the case of children as compared with adults is closely parallel. The seal of faith in the parent is applied to the child because the child is looked at as in the parent and is counted, presumptively, one with the parent in the possession of spiritual blessing.

4. In keeping with the foregoing we find **children entering into covenant with God** during the time of the Jewish nation (Num. iii. 28; Deut. xxix. 10-12). This shows with convincing clearness the possibility of child life having a true relation to God.

5. **The attitude of our Lord to little children** confirms all that has been said. It is evident from His words and action (Mark x. 13-16) that little children are capable of spiritual blessing, and that those who were brought to our Lord actually received blessing from Him. His Divine words are the great charter of childhood in relation to God, "Of such is the Kingdom of God," that is, *of such little children*, not, as some would interpret the words, "of such childlike natures," for this is the truth taught to the adults present in the next verse (v. 15). Our Lord first tells those around Him what and where children are in relation to things spiritual, and then warns those adults that they, too, must become like little children if they would enter the heavenly kingdom. "Children are not to be converted and become as men, but men are to be converted to become as little children."<sup>1</sup>

6. **The existence of households** in the record of the early Church suggests at least the possibility that young children and young people were included (Acts xvi. 15, 32, 34). This reference to the baptism of households is very prominent in the Acts and Pauline Epistles, and shows clearly what was the primitive practice. A household usually contains children, and so general and inclusive a term could hardly have been used if the reference had been only

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany, *The Prayer Book and the Christian Life*, p. 122.

to the baptism of the adult individuals composing the household. At any rate, we may safely say that if we should read nowadays of households being baptized in the Mission Field we should almost certainly infer that children were included. We question whether any one who objects to Infant Baptism would use the term "household" in relation to Baptism without some qualification or explanation. A careful study of the original language of these verses teaches us that there is a real unity and solidarity between the head of the household and the members of it; and in the case of the Philippian jailer, we are only told of his own personal faith (verse 34, Greek), though all his house were immediately baptized. Further, these references are in complete accord with the words of St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost. "The promise is unto you, and to your children" (Acts ii. 39). This statement of the Apostle clearly shows that the same genuine unity of the family which had been characteristic of the Jewish Church was to be continued in the Christian dispensation. The children were still to be one with their parents in God's covenant blessings and promises.

7. **The references to children in the Epistles** are all in the same line of thought. St. Paul teaches plainly (1 Cor. vii. 14) that the children of Christian parents are in some way hallowed and consecrated to God by reason of their parents' faith in Christ. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." A careful consideration of the context shows that there is no possibility of reference here to anything but the precious fact of the father or mother's faith hallowing and separating the little child as belonging to God. St. Paul's counsels to children (Eph. vi. 1, 4; Col. iii. 20) all take for granted the existence of children in the membership of the Apostolic Church, and as included in the "saints" and "faithful" to whom the Epistles are addressed.

The above seven considerations surely carry their definite message about the relation of childhood to God, and it is on these grounds that the Church of England finds her warrant for retaining the practice of Infant Baptism as one which is "most agreeable with the institution of Christ" and with the true spirit and genius of Christianity.

In the light of these positive considerations we can readily see the futility of any argument against Infant Baptism urged on the ground that we have no command to administer Baptism to infants. This objection would apply equally well and forcibly to several other important and vital questions, such as the admission of women to the Lord's Supper, for which we certainly have no command, though, as with Infant Baptism, we have undoubted inferences which warrant the practice. In the same way, the objection that repent-

ance and faith are required for Baptism does not in the least touch the question of childhood. Repentance and faith are required for adult salvation, but no one would think of applying these conditions to unconscious childhood. Those who insist upon faith as a prerequisite for baptism, and tie faith to baptism in so absolute a way, reveal a strange inconsistency in the case of adults who profess faith when they are baptized and who are afterwards seen to have had no real trust in God. These are not baptized over again when the real faith shows itself, and consequently even with adults it is possible to baptize without actual faith in God. In the case here contemplated the man would now be taught to enter spiritually into what his baptism was intended to mean. But this is exactly similar in principle to the position contended for in the case of children who are baptized in infancy and then taught the spiritual meaning and purpose of the Ordinance.

We conclude, therefore, that the practice of admitting infants into the visible Church of Christ, with a view to their becoming possessed of all the spiritual privileges and blessings of the Christian religion, is in entire accordance with the Word of God, and with the revelation of His will concerning children and Christian discipleship. To the Christian parent and his children the fact of Baptism remains as God's solemn pledge and assurance of grace and blessing, and as a reminder to the child when he grows up of God's gracious designation of him for all the blessings contained in Christian discipleship. The Kingdom of Christ is essentially a Kingdom of promise, and every child introduced into the communion of the Church of England is introduced in virtue of the promise of God made to the children of believers. Everything connected with the child is, from first to last, associated with the Divine promise of grace; and in the full realization, through faith in Christ, of all the blessings of the Christian Covenant will be found one of the best and most powerful means of extending the Kingdom of God in this world.

## CHAPTER XI

### *THE MODE OF BAPTISM*

IN the Rubric immediately preceding the administration of Baptism, our Church orders Baptism by immersion if it is certified that the infant "may well endure it; but if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." In the Baptism of such as are of riper years there is the same alternative of immersion

or affusion as the method of Baptism. It is well known, however, that many people insist upon the method of immersion as the only true form of Baptism, and under these circumstances it is necessary for us to consider with great care whether this assertion is true.

1. **The word "Baptism"** alone does not even suggest the element with which, or into which, Baptism is to be administered. We know from our Lord's words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," that the term was associated with other things beside the element of water. Under these circumstances the *usage* of the word must fix the significance of its meaning.

2. **In our Lord's commission**, when He instituted Christian Baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), He made use of four separate commands: Go, Make Disciples, Baptize, Teach. Three of these four commands are stated in the most general and universal terms, suited exactly to the world-wide commission then given to the disciples. The Lord did not say how they were to go, or with what methods they should make disciples and teach; all that He insisted on was obedience to these general commands. It is at least a fair presumption that the fourth of these commands, Baptize, is equally general and applicable to all circumstances in which the disciples might find themselves. As the other three commands did not express any particular method we may fairly assume, in the absence of anything to the contrary, that the fourth term only calls attention to the *fact*, without insisting upon any particular method of fulfilling the Lord's Word.

3. **The Greek word "to dip"** is *bapto* (βάπτω), with which the word "baptize" is undoubtedly associated, but it is very significant that the word "*bapto*" is never used for the Ordinance of Baptism, which is always *baptizo* (βαπτίζω).

4. The word "Baptism" is applied to the **ritual purifications of the Old Testament religion** ("divers baptisms," Heb. ix. 10), and yet no trace can be found of the method of immersion in any of the purifications and ceremonial of the Jewish religion. This is a simple fact which warrants the closest attention.

5. **The word "baptize"** was used from time to time without any idea of immersion, but simply indicating the application of water without expressing any one particular mode. This usage is found in the Old Testament Apocrypha. In Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 25 we read: "He that is purified from a dead body and touches it again, what does his cleansing profit him?" The phrase "purified from" is literally "baptized from," and the ritual purification thus referred to is that mentioned in Num. xix. 13, 16, 19; the ritual to be observed on touching a dead body. Yet a consideration of the passage in Numbers shows that the method was not immer-



sion, but sprinkling, just as we have the phrase, " hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience " (Heb. ix. 13, 14 ; x. 22). It is evident, therefore, that the word " baptize " cannot possibly be limited to the one mode of immersion.

6. We now turn to the **usage of the New Testament**. It may be said that even if the term meant immersion outside the New Testament it would not be necessarily conclusive, for words frequently change their meaning, as we can see from the Septuagint and New Testament usages of the word " ecclesia " and other similar instances. But we will submit the matter to a careful consideration of the New Testament passages in order to arrive at the truth on this subject.

(a) A comparison of Acts i. 5, " Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," and Acts ii. 33, " He hath shed forth this," clearly indicates that what is understood of the " Baptism of the Spirit " was associated in St. Peter's mind with the " pouring out " of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In like manner we read that " the Holy Ghost fell " on the household of Cornelius, and that when this took place Peter remembered our Lord's words about being " baptized with the Holy Ghost " (Acts xi. 15, 16). Whatever, then, is true of the baptism of water, it is evident that Baptism as associated with the Holy Ghost is not to be limited to immersion, but is expressed by the " pouring out " or the " falling " of the Holy Ghost. When once this is granted the whole position is clear, and we see at once that whether we regard the Holy Spirit or water, the term " Baptism " cannot be limited to one particular mode.

(b) The Baptism of our Lord. When it is said that He went up out of the water, the term would be just as natural if it described our Lord as standing in the river with the water only up to His ankles. The preposition translated " out of " need mean no more than " from," and certainly does not necessarily imply immersion.

(c) The Baptism of the Eunuch. Let us consider the circumstances here. He was on his journey homewards, and continued his journey immediately after the Baptism. Can we imagine that immersion was at all likely or even possible under the circumstances ? The language implies nothing more than entrance into water, together with the Jewish method of pouring or sprinkling which was so well known in connexion with ritual ceremonial. " Into the water " (Acts viii. 38) is certainly not conclusive of immersion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is said that Philip also went into the water. If the baptism was by pouring or sprinkling it would be natural for both to stand in the water.—J. S. W.

(d) The Baptism of Paul (Acts ix. 18) gives no countenance to the view of immersion.

(e) The Philippian jailer (Acts xvi. 33) was baptized in the middle of the night in his own house, all the circumstances indicating the improbability, if not impossibility, of immersion.

(f) The three thousand on the Day of Pentecost. Are we to suppose that there were facilities in Jerusalem for the immersion of three thousand, both men and women, in one day? The Kidron was a shallow brook, and there was no other water save drinking fountains and tanks. It was essential to a Jew that the water should be "living," i.e. in motion, as when poured.

(g) 1 Cor. x. 2. "Baptized unto Moses." What possibility is there of immersion in connexion with the story of Israel at the Red Sea?

These passages represent all the important instances where Christian Baptism is referred to in the New Testament, and they tell their own story of the impossibility of limiting our Lord's command to one particular mode.

7. It may, however, be said that "Buried with Him by baptism" (Rom. vi. 4) must refer to immersion. Let us give careful attention to this passage. The Apostle is teaching that Christ died in order to put an end to the dominion of sin in the believer's life, and that our union with Him is a union with all that His Death meant as a spiritual power. It is to be carefully noted that the reference to Death in this passage is figurative, as also the reference to Crucifixion and Resurrection, yet all arguments for immersion depend upon the idea of a literal burial in water. Why should the burial be regarded as literal when every other part of the passage is spiritual and figurative? Surely the passage means that we were united with Christ spiritually in His Death, in His Burial, and in His Resurrection. If the words are taken literally of Baptism, "Buried with Him *by* Baptism," then the Apostle cannot be acquitted of teaching Baptismal regeneration, for in this view it is "by baptism," and by baptism only, that we are buried; yet to mention this is to show how utterly impossible is such a view of the Apostolic teaching. Further, "Baptism unto death," if interpreted of water-baptism, involves the incongruity of burial with a view to death! The fact is that the passage, properly understood, does not refer to the ordinance of Baptism, but to the spiritual meaning and power of our Lord's Sufferings, Death, Burial, and Resurrection. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it is accomplished." We ought to read it, "buried with Him by the (or His) baptism unto death" i.e. His death of suffering, with which we are spiritually united. Introduce the idea of water-

baptism into this passage, and the exegesis becomes confused and impossible ; but everything is consistent if we regard the passage as suggesting the spiritual meaning of our Lord's work on our behalf, and of our consecration to Him for the purpose of becoming partakers of all that His Death, Burial, and Resurrection involved. It is this spiritual blessing that St. Paul refers to when he says, "*By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*" (1 Cor. xii. 13), and in the parallel passage (Col. ii. 11, 12), we have the same spiritual teaching of the believer's union with His Lord in Death, Burial, and Resurrection. When our Lord died we died in Him ; When He was buried we were buried ; when He rose we were raised ; when He ascended we ascended ; and now that He is at God's right hand we are seated with Him in heavenly places.

8. A further confirmation of the **impossibility of Baptism being limited to immersion**, or even meaning immersion in many instances, is found in Luke xi. 38, where the word "washed" is literally "baptized." So also Mark vii. 4, "the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." There is no thought of immersion here—at any rate, not in every case.

9. If it be said that we have **the preposition "in"** associated with Baptism, "baptized in," we must remember that this preposition very frequently expresses the instrument with which the thing is done and not the element in which it is. We can see this in such passages as Luke xxii. 49, "with the sword" ; 1 Cor. iv. 21, "with a rod" ; 1 Cor. v. 8, "with old leaven." To translate such passages with "in" is manifestly impossible.

We have now shown clearly that on every fair interpretation the word "baptized" cannot possibly be limited to immersion, and that in many of the cases immersion could not have been the method used. This is also the testimony of Christian antiquity, as a recent scholarly and able work has clearly proved.<sup>1</sup> The author shows that the remains of earliest Christian art and sculpture all point to affusion and not immersion as the ordinary and almost invariable mode of Baptism in the primitive Church.

Following the Church of England rule, we simply ask for liberty. The matter is one for individual choice or preference, but to insist upon one particular method as that which is alone according to the Divine will is not only unwarranted by the usage of the word, but is plainly against the very genius of Christian liberty, and tends to bring us back to that bondage of form and ceremony from which Christianity was delivered by the Apostle Paul. Wherever the Divine will has been clearly expressed, it is the privilege and duty of every follower of Christ to carry out God's commands to the

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Rogers, *Baptism and Christian Archæology*.

fullest extent, but in the absence of any such direction we must resist all attempts to put upon us a yoke that no true spiritual religion can possibly bear. To insist upon immersion at all costs, at all times, and under all circumstances is to insist upon that which is plainly impossible in many parts of the world for a great time of the year. This impossibility of carrying out the Divine commission on this interpretation conveys its own message, and in the light of what we have adduced as the usage of the word, it is manifest that the position taken up by the Church of England is the only one that is warranted by historical fact, common sense, practical convenience, and, above all, by the true spirit of the religion of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER XII

### *CONTROVERSIES ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION*

It is surely one of the saddest and most deplorable facts in connexion with Christianity that an Ordinance which was intended by our Lord to express Christian love and fellowship should have become the occasion of most acute differences of opinion between those who profess and call themselves Christians. The explanation of this serious fact is that there has been a departure from New Testament simplicity and purity with reference to the Lord's Supper, and it is only by means of a constant appeal to the primary sources of our information, as recorded in the Apostolic writings, that we shall ever arrive at a true idea of the nature and purpose of this holy Ordinance. We have already considered as fully as possible what the New Testament teaches, and how that spiritual teaching is exemplified and elaborated in our Prayer Book. It would be entirely satisfactory if the matter could remain at this point, but unfortunately it is necessary to state afresh the Church of England position in relation to opposing views held at the time of the Reformation, and seen in particular sections of Christian life to-day.

**I. For a true understanding of the Church of England position** it is necessary to keep in view the obvious fact that our Prayer Book as it now is, with its statement of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, dates from the Reformation, and among other things, expresses the mind of the compilers as they stood in direct opposition to Roman Catholic doctrine on this subject. It is perfectly clear to all readers of the history of the sixteenth century that Cranmer and Ridley, who, above all others, are responsible for our present formularies and their teaching on Holy Communion, were burnt at



the stake for denying the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It is also equally clear that our Prayer Book and Articles were drawn up for the definite purpose of expressing the doctrines of the Reformers as they stood opposed to the Church of Rome, and no language could well be clearer than that of our Articles on two characteristic and fundamental aspects of Roman Catholic teaching.

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. (Article xxviii)

"The Sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits." (Article xxxi)

In view of the well-known facts associated with the promulgation of the above Articles, their opposition to Roman Catholic teaching is evident to all, and any attempt at reconciling the views of the English and Roman Catholic Churches on the subject of the Lord's Supper must remain impracticable and impossible as long as these statements continue in our Articles. Certainly no Roman Catholic would for an instant accept the statements of our Prayer Book as equivalent to the doctrines of his Church, and no glosses, or explanation, or eirenicon can span the gulf that separates us from the Church of Rome. It were a vain attempt to invalidate the historical basis on which the statements of our Prayer Book and Articles rest. Both historically and theologically there is between the Church of England and the Church of Rome on this subject a great gulf fixed.

2. The doctrine of the Church of England on the Holy Communion **in relation to the foreign Protestantism** of the sixteenth century is equally clear in the light of certain well-known facts of history.

Although it is remarkable how wonderfully, wisely, and successfully our Church has avoided committing herself to any names, however great, yet there are certain historical facts that cannot be questioned. The influence of Lutheran Reformers on our Prayer Book and Articles is undoubted, and all possible weight must be given to it. But equally undoubted is the influence of the Swiss Reformers, and on the particular question of the Lord's Supper it is a simple fact that no trace of Consubstantiation can be found in our Prayer Book, while the general agreement with the doctrine of the Swiss Reformers is unmistakable. If language is to express and not to conceal thought, it is certain that the doctrine of the Church of England on the Lord's Supper is substantially that of Calvin and

those who thought with him. Nor have any changes made during the reign of Elizabeth and up to 1662 affected this fundamental standpoint. A striking testimony to this can be seen by a comparison of the Westminster Confession and our Articles.

There is therefore no question as to where Prayer Book doctrine stands in the light of Prayer Book history.

3. A further proof of the real position of our Church on the subject of the Lord's Supper is seen in **the significant and fundamental changes made in the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI (1552)** as contrasted with the Prayer Book of 1549. Among other changes the following are perhaps the most important and most worthy of notice for our present purpose:—

(a) The term "Altar" was struck out and no longer used of the Holy Table.

(b) The officiating clergyman was to stand "at the North side" of the Table instead of "afore the midst of the altar."

(c) The invocation of the Holy Spirit on the Elements was omitted.

(d) The distinctive sacrificial vestments for use at the Communion were forbidden.

(e) The structure of the Communion Office was deliberately altered in order to avoid possible misconception of the meaning of certain prayers; for example, the long prayer of Oblation was separated from the Consecration Prayer and made one of the Post-Communion Collects.

(f) All prayer for the dead was omitted, and the words "militant here in Earth" were added before the long prayer for the Church of Christ.

These alterations tell their own story of the way in which the Church of England removed from her formularies everything that savoured of distinctive Roman Catholic teaching on the Holy Communion, and it is to be remembered that when Queen Elizabeth revived the use of the Prayer Book, the second Book of 1552 was taken as the basis of the revision, and this Book has remained in all its essential features unaltered to this day. It can be proved by most certain warrants of historic fact that the addition made to the Church Catechism in 1604, and the re-insertion, with a verbal alteration, of the Black Rubric in 1662, made no essential alteration in the doctrinal teaching of our Church on this subject.

4. We have insisted upon a consideration of these historical facts at some length, because they are being questioned in the present day, and the Church of England is being made to hold doctrine which is virtually, if not essentially, identical with the teaching of the Church of Rome. This attempt to reconcile the teaching of our Church with that of Rome is associated with what is known as

the Oxford or Tractarian Movement which arose in the Church of England some seventy years ago. The leaders of this school, especially John Henry, afterwards Cardinal, Newman, attempted to show that there was essential agreement between the two Churches on the doctrine of the Holy Communion, but Newman, with others, very soon discovered the untenableness of this position and went over to the Church of Rome. Many others, however, since his day have adopted his earlier position, until at length we have a writer expressing himself as follows—

“ At the present time, whatever differences in detail and in inference may exist, and however differently certain terms may be defined, there is agreement among Eastern Christians, Roman Catholics, and the successors of the Tractarians in the Church of England, as to that central part of the doctrine of the Eucharist, the expression of which by the English Church Union in 1900 may be cited as a convenient illustration. It was there declared ‘ that in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the bread and wine, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, become, verily and indeed the body and blood of Christ, and that Christ our Lord, present in the same Most Holy Sacrament of the altar under the form of bread and wine, is to be worshipped and adored.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

It is this claim to identify the teaching of our Church with that of Rome that compels true Churchmen to stand up in defence of the true doctrine of Scripture and the Prayer Book and Articles on this subject.

(A) One of these questions of controversy is concerned with the doctrine of the Real Presence. That is, a real objective Presence of Christ’s glorified Body in or under the elements after consecration, apart from any presence in the faithful recipient.

The Church of England nowhere teaches this. The phrase “ Real Presence ” is not found in any of our Formularies, and is ambiguous and most misleading. All presence of Christ must be real, and a spiritual presence is not less real because it is spiritual. The usual meaning and application refer to Christ in His glorified human nature, which is said to be present in or under the elements by virtue of consecration. Nowhere is this taught in Scripture or Prayer Book, and the Church doctrine which is really Bible truth is found along the following lines :

(1) The tendency of those who uphold the doctrine of an objective Presence in the elements is to take the four words only, “ This is My Body,” and on the strength of these alone to argue for a real objective presence of our Lord’s glorified Body. But our Lord said more than this, and we must have His full statement. “ This is My Body which is given for you ” ; “ This is My Blood of the new covenant which is shed for you.” It was, therefore, to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Communion*, by Darwell Stone, p. 186.—Note, however, the striking admission by Dom Gregory Dix in chap. xvi of *The Shape of the Liturgy*.—J. S. W.

Body *as given* and the Blood *as shed* that our Lord referred. He said not a word about the glorified Body. Neither does St. Paul, whose references to the Holy Communion are to the "Body and Blood." How could the allusion to "blood shed" have any reference to the glorified Body?

(2) The gift of our Lord at the original institution was no different from that bestowed by Him at our celebrations to-day. What He gave then He gives now, and any view that maintains a difference between the first and succeeding Eucharists is utterly unwarranted by Scripture. The gift is the same in fact, meaning, and blessing. Our Lord said these words when His Body was *not yet* given on the Cross and His Blood *not yet* shed; when He was Himself before them, and there could not be any objective presence in the elements. Yet we believe they received a gift, a grace, a blessing. This was His Body *as given* and Blood *as shed*, in their spiritual force and efficacy; a gift offered to and received by faith alone. And the same gift is offered and received now in exactly the same way, the only difference being that their faith appropriated the gift in expectation and anticipation of Calvary, while our faith appropriates it in remembrance and realization of it. There is nothing in our Formularies to give any foundation for the doctrine of a presence in or under the elements or for the idea of a difference of gift or reception now as compared with the original institution. In the Communion Service, but still more in the more precise language of the Article, we find that the Body of Christ is not only taken and eaten, but first of all "*given*" "after a heavenly and spiritual manner."

(3) The Prayer Book speaks of the Body given "for" us and not "to" us, and the words of administration in our service speak of the Body "*which was given for,*" not "*which is given to,*" us. The two parts of the Sacrament emphasize the constituent elements of our Lord's sacrifice in a body broken and blood shed. The separation in the ordinance of these two parts is its own silent testimony to the fact of death, and death only.

We maintain, that the Tractarian doctrine, while it demands the literal interpretation of our Lord's words, does not really adhere to them, but takes only a portion, and thereby puts an entirely novel and erroneous gloss on them. We refuse to import into the simplicity and clearness of Scripture what is not found there.

(4) Moreover, if there be a real objective Presence in the elements, what becomes of that Presence in the case of unworthy recipients? If the Communion is administered to three persons and the second is void of faith, what on this theory is given and received different from the case of the other two? If Christ be present independently



of the use and reception, it surely follows that all who receive the elements receive Christ. "Yes," says this novel modern teaching, "receive Christ but not the benefits of Christ." But is such a position conceivable? Can a man really receive Christ without His benefits? What, too, are we to make of the plain teaching of Article XXIX with its "*in no wise* are they partakers of Christ"? "In no wise" (*nullo modo*) could hardly be stronger.

The fact is there is no distinction in kind between Christ's presence at the Eucharist and His presence elsewhere. The bread and wine point to "flesh" and "blood," and the flesh and blood to the personality of Christ in His atoning work; and this is made ours in force and grace, by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith. We receive in the Holy Communion the spiritual efficacy of the Atoning Sacrifice through faith.

(B) Connected with the doctrine of the Real Objective Presence is that of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

This phrase is intended to mean some sacrifice associated exclusively with the Eucharist. A representative of this new teaching, A. J. Mason, thus defines it (*Faith of the Gospel*, p. 327): "The continual offering up to God of the Person of Jesus Christ, in His Body and His Blood. Christ empowered and commanded His Apostles to do this when He made the Eucharist His own memorial." "We display to Him that precious body and blood in which all our hopes are centred. Such an act is most truly a sacrifice" (p. 328). To this we reply:

(1) There is no warrant in Scripture for such an idea of sacrifice connected with the Eucharist or with anything else. The essential feature of a sacrifice, according to this writer, is "the presentation to God of that which is precious to us and acceptable to Him." Even if we grant this, what do we "present" in and at the Eucharist except ourselves, our substance, and our praises? Pleading a sacrifice is not offering a sacrifice. Even representation is not representation. We do not "display" the Body and Blood; we plead the merits and appropriate the grace of the Body broken and the Blood shed. But what is there of sacrifice in this?

(2) This doctrine utterly fails to realize the nature of our Lord's life in heaven. He is not offering Himself; He is seated on the throne, having already offered Himself once for all (ἐφάπαξ, Heb. vii. 27; ix. 12; x. 10). In the book already quoted, written as a book of popular instruction for members of the English Church, occur these words (*Faith of the Gospel*, p. 330 f.)—"He allows us at the altar to do with Him what He Himself does in heaven . . . In this sense . . . we may say that the Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice." The simple and sufficient answer to all this is to be

found in the above-named chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(3) The Prayer Book will be searched in vain for any such doctrine of an Eucharistic sacrifice. The only sacrifices other than that of Calvary known to our Church Formularies are the sacrifices of ourselves, our substance, and our praises. As we have already seen (p. 163) there is not even an oblation of the unconsecrated elements, as a comparison of the rubrics concerning these and the alms significantly shows.

(4) The truth is that, strictly and accurately, the Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice, but a sacrament. It has sacrificial aspects and relations because it is so closely associated in thought and purpose with the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and because it is the standing testimony to the world and to ourselves of our constant need of and perpetual dependence on that sacrifice in all our approach to God. But the ordinance in itself and alone cannot with accuracy be called a sacrifice. It is a sacrament of a sacrifice, "the Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death" (Article XXIX). It is a feast on that sacrifice. The essential distinction between a sacrifice and a sacrament is that in the former God is the Receiver (or the *terminus ad quem*), while in the latter God is the Giver (or the *terminus a quo*). In a sacrifice we give, we yield up; in a sacrament we receive, we appropriate. The only acts in the Lord's Supper, according to the institution, are "take," "eat," "drink," "this do," and these are not sacrificial. The ideas of a sacrifice and a sacrament are so distinct and different that the Lord's Supper, unless Scripture warrants it, cannot be both at the same time. The Passover was both sacrificial and sacramental; but the proper antitype to that is not the Lord's Supper, but the Lord Himself, who is at once our sacrifice and our Feast." Christ "our Passover, was sacrificed (*ἐτύθη*) for us; therefore let us keep continual festival (*ἐορτάζωμεν*)" (1 Cor. v. 7). The Lord's Supper is not strictly and fully the antitype of the Passover, it is the rite of our life and worship which is analogous to it in the sacramental but not in the sacrificial aspect.

Exegesis of New Testament teaching is fatal to this doctrine of an Eucharistic sacrifice, as it is always consistently opposed to the characteristic Roman and extreme Anglican claims. Neither *ποιεῖτε* ("do this,") nor *ἀνάμνησις* ("remembrance") has anything sacrificial in it in these passages, because there is nothing in the context to warrant it, while the object of the verb *καταγγέλλετε* ("ye do shew"), (1 Cor. xi. 26), which means "to proclaim verbally glad tidings," can be only *man* and not God. In the Lord's Supper Christ is neither offered "to" God, nor "for" man; He is offered "to" man as Saviour and sustenance to be welcomed by faith. It will

be well, therefore, to get rid of ambiguous and misleading terms. The Lord's Supper is not a commemorative sacrifice; it is the commemoration of a sacrifice; and, if the words Eucharistic sacrifice mean some sacrifice which is offered only at and in the Lord's Supper, then we assert that no such idea occurs in Bible or Prayer Book.

The cardinal error of the Church of Rome and those who think with her on this subject, is that the Sacraments "contain" grace, that by the consecration the elements contain the grace they signify, and that by the reception of the elements grace is conveyed in them. But in answer to this we ask two questions—(1) How can the spiritual reside in the material? Regeneration means God's own life! How can that reside in water? The Atonement means the spiritual efficacy of Calvary. How can that reside in bread and wine? (2) How can the application to the body necessarily convey grace to the soul?

The whole position is un-Scriptural, un-Anglican, un-historical, unreal, untrue. It ministers to superstition, tends to materialism, and is perilous to the soul in relation to God and Christ.

3. **Several other important questions** emerge out of modern Controversies on the Lord's Supper.

(a) *The Time of Communion.* The Church of England has not laid down any rule on this subject, but certain facts in the arrangement of her services suggest very clearly that Holy Communion is contemplated as coming after, not before, Morning Prayer. We see this from the arrangement of the Second Lesson of each day in the week before Easter which precedes the Gospel for the day, and so affords a sequence of teaching on the Passion of our Lord. A similar arrangement of lessons is seen on other occasions, thus indicating clearly that the custom in the sixteenth century was for Morning Prayer to precede Holy Communion. The needs of modern life, however, have called for more frequent opportunities, and so we have, on the one hand, early Morning Communion, and on the other Evening Communion, both of which are in strict accordance with the spirit of the Prayer Book, and its provision of a weekly Communion intended for all possible communicants. The question of the time of Communion would naturally be decided according to the needs of the parish; it is a matter as to which the deciding factor will rightly be the convenience of the greater number of communicants. Evening Communion is, of course, in perfect keeping with our Lord's institution of the Supper in the evening, and also in strict accordance with the rule of the primitive Church.<sup>1</sup> The change in the second century from evening to morning was

<sup>1</sup> See Lightfoot, *Epistles of Ignatius* (*ad. Smyrn.*, chap. viii, note). Also *The Protestant Dictionary*, Art. "Communion, Evening."

probably due in measure to the edict of the Emperor Trajan against the meetings of clubs and other social organizations. The question of time is thus of very small moment and every parish will naturally make its arrangements to suit all classes by having Holy Communion at various times from early morning till the evening. Here, if anywhere, the well-known formula applies, "the greatest good of the greatest number."

(b) Fasting Communion. The Church has made no rule whatever on this subject, though the fact of Morning Prayer being arranged to precede the Holy Communion would seem to be somewhat against Fasting Communion as a custom of the sixteenth century. The matter is one of individual preference and not of Church obligation. Our Lord instituted the Holy Communion immediately after a meal, and the evening Communions of the first century and a half, already referred to, show that Fasting Communion was not the primitive custom. It is to be feared that Fasting Communion in the present day is associated with materialistic views of the Holy Communion, as though the Lord were in the elements, and therefore must be received before other food. If this were true it might be regarded as necessary to do still more than this, to abstain from food after Communion until the elements had become digested, for there is surely no essential difference between receiving the Communion after food and receiving food immediately after the Communion. Receiving the Communion fasting is no necessary spiritual qualification for participation in that Holy Feast. The requirements laid down by our Church of Repentance, Faith, and Love are the only essential qualifications for true Communion, and when these are observed we have everything that is necessary. The great principle of Christian liberty enters here as elsewhere. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." That this question of fasting Communion should be made a matter of obligation is strongly to be deprecated, especially in the face of the fact that our Church has never laid down any such rule.

(c) The Dress of the Minister. Our Church makes no distinction between the dress of the minister at Morning and Evening Prayer and at Holy Communion. The Ornaments Rubric (see p. 287) speaks of the dress of the ministers "at all times of their ministrations," and this rule has been accordingly observed. For nearly three hundred years universal custom has settled the question for all true Churchmen that the surplice is the proper dress or vestment for the Holy Communion as well as at all other times of ministration.

(d) Mixing water with the Wine. In the Prayer Book of 1549 there was a Rubric ordering this, but it was omitted in 1552, and never restored, so that now no provision whatever can be found



for this in the Prayer Book. This fact seems conclusive as to the mind of the Church of England.

(e) Reservation of the Elements. In the Prayer Book of 1549 provision was made for the Reservation of the Elements after Public Communion for the purpose of the Visitation of the Sick, but in 1552 this rule was omitted, and in 1662 clear orders were given that all consecrated Elements remaining after the Communion should be consumed in the Church and not carried out of the Church. This order still obtains in the Sixth Rubric at the close of the Communion Office, and in keeping with it we have the teaching of Article XXV, which tells us that "the Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them." Facts like these carry their own meaning as to the mind of our Church.

Such, then, is the true Church doctrine as to the object, purpose, and administration of the Lord's Supper. From the examination of the Prayer Book in the light of Scripture and of its own history, there can be no serious doubt as to its true meaning. And one great proof of this is that we, as Churchmen, are content with our own Communion Service as it stands. We have no wish to add to it from other service books, Roman or Sarum; nor have we any desire to return to the partially reformed book of 1549, even though that was greatly in advance of pre-Reformation books. We take our stand on the Prayer Book Service, and find in it complete expression and justification of our position.

The practical application of all this is that we must not exaggerate the position of the Lord's Supper. This is only too possible, and is done in very much of the teaching of to-day. The Holy Communion is emphasized out of all proportion as the "one thing needful" in the Christian life and service, and the result of the exaggeration is a positive distortion of the truth concerning it, and a positive peril to the people who receive the teaching. Experience teaches us to watch carefully and scrutinize rigidly every phrase used in certain quarters about the Sacraments, especially that of the Lord's Supper. When we hear of "Sacramental Grace" we should at once ask what it means. If it means that grace is received in the due reception of the Sacrament, well and good; but if it means grace received there and nowhere else, it is absolutely wrong.

When we hear or read of "Eucharistic worship" we must inquire what it is intended to convey. If it means worship offered to our Lord at the time when we receive the Holy Communion, well and good; but if it means a special kind of worship, or a special kind of worship limited to the Lord's Supper, then it is unwarranted by Scripture and Prayer Book.

Again, when we hear that the Holy Communion is "the highest act of Christian worship," we must ask for the true meaning. If it means "the central act of Christian worship," well and good; but if it means an act of worship higher in degree and kind from that offered elsewhere, it is wrong. Worship consists of at least seven acts—Prayer, Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession, Adoration, Surrender, Hearing God's Word, and it is impossible to speak of any one act as the highest when all are needed to complete the one idea of worship.

### CHAPTER XIII

#### *"THE PRINCIPAL SERVICE"*

By a number of Churchpeople during recent years the service of Holy Communion has been called "the Principal Service," and on this account it has been urged that, in the words of a resolution of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, "no arrangements for worship should be regarded as satisfactory which do not provide for a celebration of Holy Communion as the principal Sunday service at a time when the greatest number can be expected to communicate." To the same effect the Holy Communion has been called "the Lord's Own Service," and for this reason it is maintained that it ought to have precedence of all other services. These contentions involve so much that is important in regard to doctrine that they call for the most careful consideration by all "sober and conscientious sons of the Church of England."

It is known that in the early Church, at least from the middle of the second century, the Lord's Supper was the chief public service of the Church, though it must never be forgotten that the ancient Liturgies which give various forms of this service cannot be dated earlier than the fifth century. Our Prayer Book similarly shows the prominence and importance of the Holy Communion service in the worship of the Church, and no one wishes to set aside the Holy Communion or relegate it to a place which is not warranted by the Prayer Book.

It would seem that at the Reformation Morning Prayer was originally separated from Holy Communion by an interval, but it was not long before the service of Morning Prayer, Litany and Holy Communion were said together, and this became the almost universal rule until modern days. The difficulty was that, while naturally providing for every aspect of worship, this blending of three separate offices made the service unduly long, and the result

has been an increasing tendency to have the service of Holy Communion alone at an earlier hour, and then to have Morning Prayer, with the Holy Communion service at mid-day on certain Sundays. The proposal to have the Lord's Supper at an hour when the greatest number can be expected to communicate is apparently intended to refer to the time at which Morning Prayer has hitherto been taken, namely, at eleven o'clock. But there are some real difficulties in the way and one or two quite serious objections. The result would be, in many cases, the virtual omission, if not the suppression, of Morning Prayer, and thereby the large majority of people would cease to have some of the most vital elements of worship brought before them. It would mean the omission of the Psalms and also of the Lessons, especially from the Old Testament, for no one could say that the portions of Scripture appointed for "Epistles and Gospels" would be an adequate substitute for the Lessons read at Morning Prayer. Not only would the Old Testament be omitted altogether, except in one solitary instance, but there would be no consecutive teaching week by week.

There is a much more serious objection to the proposal which desires the Holy Communion service to be held at the time at which Morning Prayer is now taken. It would bring about and perhaps necessitate the attendance of many people at the Holy Communion without communicating. This practice would be entirely opposed to one of the fundamental principles of the Reformation, as set forth in our Prayer Book. Attendance without communicating is clearly opposed to Scripture, where every instance of the Lord's Supper includes participation. The same is true of the Church of England practice, for it can be shown beyond all question that our Church has always discountenanced attendance without communicating. Up to 1662 the people were exhorted to avoid remaining without participation, and the omission of this exhortation in the last revision of the Prayer Book is known to be due to the fact that the practice had died out, for the revisers of that Prayer Book spoke very definitely against any one staying without communicating. In addition to this, leading authorities at the Universities and elsewhere have shown that the practice is not only against Scripture, but is not warranted by the practice of the primitive Church, still less by anything in the Church of England. Similar views have been expressed by some of the most representative Churchmen of what may be called the High Church school during the last half-century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See discussions in *English Church Teaching*, p. 141; *Communion of the Laity* (Scudamore); *Two Studies in the Book of Common Prayer* (Bishop Drury); *The Principal Service* (Streatfield); *Non-communicating Attendance* (Lias) in the *Prayer Book Dictionary*; and *The Protestant Dictionary*, Art. "Non-communicating Attendance" (Meyrick).

It has often been pointed out that one of the purposes of the Reformation was to "turn the Mass into a Communion," but if the proposal now discussed were to become law, it would have the precisely contrary effect of turning the Communion into the Mass, and, as such, would be against the plainest teachings of the Prayer Book and the whole history of the Church of England for nearly three hundred years. It is clear from the Rubrics in the Prayer Book service that non-communicants are to withdraw before the actual celebration; and the natural place for this is at the close of the Church Militant Prayer.

In regard to the description of the Holy Communion as "the Lord's Own Service," it has often been pointed out that, while the Lord's Supper is a Divine Institution, the service itself is no more so than any other service, because it is a matter of ecclesiastical arrangement. Thus the Epistles and Gospels are in no sense more sacred than the Lessons from Scripture at Morning Prayer, and the Hymns of Praise in the Communion Office are in no sense different from those in the Morning and Evening Prayer. It is, therefore, fallacious to speak of the Holy Communion as "the Lord's Own Service," because this tends to make a distinction which is unauthorized by Holy Scripture. General services of prayer and praise, the preaching and hearing of the Word, are enjoined in many parts of the Bible as the ordinary means of grace by which we may approach God at all times. But this appeal for prayer, thanksgiving, and attention to the Word of God is emphasized without any mention of the Holy Communion.

And so, whether we speak of the Holy Communion as "the Principal Service" or as "the Lord's Own Service," there is a danger of inaccuracy and misconception. The Holy Communion can be rightly regarded as the main public service of our Church for those who are spiritually qualified; but it is this, whatever the precise time of observance, or whether the communicants are few or many. The supreme requirement is spiritual preparation as laid down by our Catechism and Ante-Communion Service, and the question of large attendance ought never to be allowed to enter in. Even a few communicants properly prepared along the lines of repentance, faith and love, as required in our Prayer Book, would be far truer to Scripture and to the essential meaning of the Holy Communion as taught by our Church than the largest congregations of people who, for one reason or another, do not participate. Our Church is specially careful to emphasise the true Scriptural use of Holy Communion, and those who, following the Prayer Book, desire to adhere to its Scriptural teaching will have no difficulty in observing our Lord's command regularly, earnestly and heartily, whatever



may be the time fixed for the Communion, or however many or few may be present to communicate.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *THE ATHANASIAN CREED*

THIRTEEN times in the course of the Christian Year "the Creed, commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius," is ordered to be used instead of the Apostles' Creed. Included in these thirteen occasions are the great Festivals of Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, and Trinity Sunday. This particular method of using this Creed instead of the Apostles' Creed is peculiar to the Church of England, and was probably ordered by the Reformers because of the emphasis which, as we have so often noticed, they placed on instruction and on the need of an intelligent, clear, full Faith. Up to the sixteenth century this Creed had been used as a Canticle at Morning Service; now it was to be employed definitely as a Confession of Faith.

During the last fifty years there has been a great deal of discussion as to the advantage of the Church of England use of the Creed, and in order that we may be prepared to consider the question all round it is essential that we should be made acquainted with certain facts connected with this exposition of the Christian Faith.

**1. The Origin of the Creed.**—It dates probably from about the fifth century, and almost certainly it arose in the Church of the South of France. It does not seem to have been originally intended as a Creed, but as an explanation and amplification of the Nicene Creed for the use of the ill-instructed clergy of that time. It is more than probable that the circumstances of the Reformation, with the dense ignorance of God's truth then prevalent, led to its present use in the Public Service at Morning Prayer.

**2. The Purpose of the Creed.**—It is intended for those who already possess the Christian Faith. In verse 1, "hold the Catholick Faith," means to retain what we have, and not to obtain what we have not. No one can hold that which he does not possess. It is incorrect, therefore, to say that this Creed is intended for the heathen, and for those outside the Church. It does not touch these in the least, but is for Church members, to safeguard them against error and to prevent them from letting go what they have. History points with sad clearness to a tendency to deflect from the true standard of Christian doctrine, and the Creed is intended as a test and a safeguard like the plumb-line or the spirit-level.

The Creed does not pass any judgment on men or individuals, but simply declares the whole counsel of God on the matters concerned. The proper translation of the word "will" in verse 1 is "wishes," that is, "Whosoever wills to be saved," and in verse 29 "rightly" means "faithfully," referring not merely to intellectual correctness, but to moral and spiritual integrity.

### 3. The Substance of the Creed.

(a) Part 1. The Christian Doctrine of God; the Holy Trinity. The prevailing thought of this section is *Revelation*.

(b) Part 2. The Christian Doctrine of the Person of Christ; the Incarnation. The prevailing thought here is *Redemption*.

4. **The Message of the Creed.**—The essential meaning of this document is that we must have right thoughts of God and Christ. It is in Christianity alone that God is a reality and power in human life. Mohammedanism separates God completely from man. Buddhism loses God entirely in the world. Unitarianism has the same essential tendency as Mohammedanism in relation to God. Paganism of every sort has no contact of God with man, no mediation, no salvation, no grace, no love, no hope. We can see from all this how important and essential it is for us to have true ideas of the one true God.

A careful study of the Creed will show that it is by no means true to speak of it as teaching salvation through correct opinion only. The Creed itself refers to our giving account for our own *works*.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it must never be forgotten that opinion undoubtedly influences conduct.

Our Church only receives the Creed because it is believed to be warranted from Holy Scripture (Article VIII). This we can readily test for ourselves. The minatory or condemnatory clauses are not in themselves any stronger than such passages as Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36, xii. 48.

5. **The Value of the Creed.**—It is one of the fundamental facts of experience that thought influences life. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What we think of God occupies our mind, fills our heart, and necessarily influences our character. Conduct may be "three-fourths" of life, but the other "fourth" is the spring, source, and foundation of all the rest. As electricity is small compared with its effects, so are thought and motive to the conduct. The Apostle Paul was insistent upon the necessity of healthful teaching, or "sound doctrine." "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus ii. 1.) The supreme question, therefore, is what we think of God, for if God is the light of the mind He will

<sup>1</sup> "At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give account for their own works."

soon become the life of the soul, His law will possess the conscience, His love will fill the heart, and the practical outcome will be loyalty to Him in our will, and likeness to Him in our character.

**6. The Use of the Creed.**—A great deal of the controversy associated with the Athanasian Creed refers, not to the truth of the doctrine contained in it, but to the wisdom of using it as a Creed in public service. It is felt by very many that to put metaphysical and theological language dealing with such profound and mysterious realities into the mouths of average congregations, uninstructed in theological distinctions, is at once unnecessary and unwise. It is also urged that the intellectual elaboration of the truths which are only found implicitly in and germ in the New Testament tends to disproportion and false emphasis, and a too great concentration on the intellectual rather than on the spiritual and practical aspects of the Christian life. There is a great deal to be said for these objections, and certainly there is by no means the same necessity for its use as a Creed at Morning Prayer as our Reformers considered there was at the Reformation. The question might well be re-opened by the authorities of the Church with a view to some relaxation or modification of the present rule. The simplest and easiest change would perhaps be to alter the Rubric from "shall" to "may," making the use of the Creed on the thirteen occasions above-mentioned optional instead of obligatory. This would at any rate have the advantage of retaining the use of it in those congregations where there is no desire for change, and at the same time giving freedom to those who wish some relaxation. At the same time optional uses have their own dangers and difficulties, and it might be better still to follow the example of the Church of Ireland. In that Church the Creed is no longer used in the Public Service, though it still retains its place in the Prayer Book as one of the great Documents of antiquity expressive of the Catholic Faith. The Creed is not found at all in the Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, and yet there has been no deflection from the true Faith by reason of this omission. In Canada its use has been made optional. It should also be pointed out that the essential elements of its value and importance, as stated above, would be completely retained if the usage of the Irish Church were followed, or if the Rubric were made optional. Amidst all the difference of opinion about the wisdom of its use as a Creed, there is very little difference among Churchmen as to the truth of its statements concerning the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of our Lord.

## CHAPTER XV

*THE ORNAMENTS RUBRIC*

SINCE the middle of the nineteenth century there has been a great deal of controversy connected with what is generally known as the "Ornaments Rubric," the direction which is found just before the Order for Morning Prayer.

"And here is to be noted, that such Ornaments of the Church, and of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their Ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of *England*, by the authority of Parliament, in the Second Year of the Reign of King *Edward* the Sixth."

It is urged by some that the wording of this Rubric orders certain vestments of the minister and certain ornaments of the Church which were either found in the Prayer Book of 1549, or required by the English Communion Office of 1548, the difference turning on what is meant by "the authority of Parliament in the Second Year of King Edward the Sixth."

Very serious consequences, however, are involved in this difference of opinion as to the meaning of the second Year of King Edward the Sixth's reign. If the phrase refers to the first Prayer Book of 1549, the use of the Alb and Chasuble, *or* the use of the Alb and Cope was enjoined in that book. Thus the Rubric, though compulsory and not merely permissive, does not compel the minister at Holy Communion to wear the Chasuble if he prefers the Cope. If, however, the reference in the Rubric to the "second year" of King Edward the Sixth applies to the English Order of Holy Communion of 1548 the case is very different. It is therein explicitly provided that this Order, which is a little pamphlet in English and arranges for the restoration of the Cup to the Laity, is to be inserted in the middle of the Latin Mass, immediately after the Communion of the Priest himself, and it is expressly provided that there shall be no other varying of any rite or ceremony pertaining to the Mass.

It can readily be seen that the question thus raised is a very serious one; indeed the real character of the Church of England may be said to turn on it. If we are compelled to accept either of the above alternatives as the true interpretation the issue is one of the greatest gravity. In the case of the Order of Holy Communion of 1548 the application of the Rubric to this would mean the revival of the whole of the ceremonial and dress of the Roman Mass, and, by direct inference, with the ceremonial would come the doctrine symbolized thereby. If, on the other hand, the reference in the Rubric is to the Prayer Book of 1549 the Chasuble would be legal and possible in the Church of England, and this vestment,



together with the Alb, has long been inextricably associated with Roman Catholic and Mediaeval sacerdotal teaching on the Holy Communion. It is therefore necessary on every ground that we should have before us all the facts of the case in order to arrive at a right decision.

1. It is well known that at the time of the Reformation **certain clearly defined stages** marked the issue of the formularies of the Reformed Church. In 1548 the Communion Office, referred to above, was put forth in English for the instruction and convenience of worshippers. This document marked the last stages of the unreformed religion, though it showed also some slight indications of the Reform movement. It was, however, of a temporary character only, and was soon set aside by the complete Prayer Book of 1549, known as the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. This Book may be defined as of a partially reformed type, that is, while it was decidedly opposed to the Church of Rome on general grounds, it continued some of the mediaeval doctrines and ceremonies. Its order as to vestments is referred to above, and is one of the indications of the partially reformed position of the book.

2. **The year 1552** saw the next stage of the Reformation movement, and this was marked by the issue of the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. The distinctively Protestant character of this book was undoubted, and all doctrines, vestments, and practices associated with definitely Roman and mediaeval teaching and ceremonial were eliminated. The Rubric of this Prayer Book as to vestments read as follows—

“ And here is to be noted that the minister at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministration, shall use neither alb, vestment, nor cope ; but being Archbishop or Bishop he shall have and wear a rochet ; and being a priest or deacon, he shall have and wear a surplice only.”

3. **In 1559, when the Reformed religion was restored** under Queen Elizabeth, it was the Prayer Book of 1552, not that of 1549, which was taken as the basis of the settlement. There were only three slight alterations made in the 1559 book compared with that of 1552, none of which was concerned with the question of vestments and ornaments.<sup>1</sup> This restoration of the Prayer Book of 1552 is a vital factor in the situation, because it shows clearly the doctrinal standpoint of the restoration of 1559, and doctrine is always the ruling principle of ceremonial. Ceremonial is only intended to be the expression of doctrine, and it is obvious that ceremonial must be in agreement with the doctrine it is intended to represent and symbolize.

4. Yet notwithstanding this statutory restoration of the Prayer

<sup>1</sup> These alterations are listed in the Act of Uniformity (*Primo Elizabethae*) printed at the beginning of the Book of Common Prayer.—J. S. W.

Book of 1552, an injunction, similar to that which we now call the "Ornaments Rubric," was found in the *printed Prayer Book of 1559*. It read as follows—

"And here it is to be noted that the minister at the time of the Holy Communion, and at all other times in his ministration shall use such Ornaments in the Church as were in use by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI, according to the Act of Parliament set forth in the beginning of this book."

It is the apparent contradiction between the wording of this Rubric and the doctrinal position of the rest of the Prayer Book which has made and still makes the subject one of pressing controversy. There are two explanations of this somewhat complicated matter which call for attention. They both arrive at the same conclusion, though they reach it by different routes.

(a) One explanation is that the Ornaments Rubric which was found in Elizabeth's *printed Prayer Book* was lacking in statutory authority, i.e. it never received the sanction of Parliament. This seems to have undoubtedly been the case. It was possibly inserted by the Queen on her personal responsibility. The following clause appeared at the end of Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity, 1559—

"Provided always, and be it enacted, That such Ornaments of the Church and of the Ministers thereof, shall be retained and be in use, as was in this church of England by authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, until other Order shall therein be taken by the Authority of the Queen's Majesty, with the advice of her Commissioners appointed and authorised under the great Seal of England for Causes Ecclesiastical, or of the Metropolitan of this Realm."

The above clause, on this interpretation, was intended as a safeguard against the embezzlement of the property of the Church before the administrative Officers of the Crown could give due instructions for the disposal of it. There is contemporary evidence that one meaning of "be in use" was "be in trust," i.e. not appropriated to private benefit. These instructions of the Crown as to the disposal of the vestments followed immediately on the issue of the new Prayer Book in the course of a few months after the Act of 1559. The importance of these instructions of the Crown may be seen from the fact that they were given in the course of a Royal Visitation, which dealt with the whole country simultaneously for a space of about six months, by a Commission, in which was, for the time being, incorporated the whole ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the country.

(b) The other explanation is that the Rubric was first inserted (though by what precise authority is not known) in the Elizabethan Prayer Book in accordance with the above-named clause of the Act of Uniformity of 1559, which, as we have seen, ordered the retention of the two classes of ornaments, viz. of the Church and of the

Minister used "by authority of Parliament" in the second year of Edward VI (the Prayer Book of 1549), until other order should be taken by the Queen and her advisers. And it is also held that in 1566 the Queen took this "other order" by the issue of what are known as the "Advertisements," in which directions were given that the surplice only should be used in Parish Churches, with the addition of the cope in Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches. The then existing Rubric was virtually annulled by this "other order," though it continued to be found in the Prayer Book with the same wording as before. Thus the test of legality on this interpretation is simply what ornaments were retained and in use by authority dating from the second year of Edward VI, and not abolished entirely, or else altered by the Advertisements of 1566.

These are the two lines of explanation of this Rubric. The latter is that which was given in the Courts of Law in what are known as the Purchas and Ridsdale Judgments. The former is, however, the more probable one, in view of recent historical light thrown on the subject.

5. At the same time, there is no question whatever as to **actual fact and custom from 1559**. The universal practice of the Church after 1559 was the use of the dress of ministration which had been ordered by the Prayer Book of 1552, quoted above. The Bishops' Visitations show this very clearly. They inquired in every case as to the use of surplice and hood. The Royal Advertisements of 1566, already referred to, point in the same direction. It is obvious that such inquiries and orders on the part of the very Authorities in Church and State who were responsible for the Prayer Book and Act of 1559 prove conclusively that no departure from the Prayer Book of 1552 was intended. And whatever may be the explanation of the insertion of the Ornaments Rubric, it is certain that the Authorities responsible for the observance of the 1559 Book entirely ignored that Rubric. Inasmuch as the Rubric of 1552, as to the dress of the clergy, was not among the alterations specified in 1559, it should have been printed with the rest of the Prayer Book instead of being in some non-legal way omitted, and the Elizabethan Rubric substituted for it. But universal practice was entirely in accordance with the Rubric of 1552, and the dress of ministration ordered by the first Prayer Book of 1549 was never adopted from 1559 onwards. The Canon of 1604 is in exact agreement with the above historical facts, for it orders the dress of the clergy to be the surplice.

6. In 1662, at the last revision of the Prayer Book, Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity was incorporated into and made a part of the newly enacted Book, and the wording of the Ornaments Rubric was

altered to its present form to bring it into conformity with the Act. Owing to the confusions of the Commonwealth period very little was then known of the earlier Prayer Book ; but it *was* known that under the Elizabethan settlement the surplice, hood, and scarf had been the sole dress of ministration, with occasionally the cope in Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches ; it was known, moreover, that " Certayne Notes " at the end of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI mentioned only the surplice for Parish Churches, which notes were erroneously believed to govern the entire book, and as the authorities both in the Church and State wished to revert to the practice in force during the reign of Elizabeth, they altered her non-statutory Rubric so as to bring it into conformity with the Act of 1559.

It should be carefully borne in mind that the Act of 1662 did not repeal, but enforced and strengthened the Elizabethan Act. Whatever the twenty-fifth Section of Elizabeth's Act meant, the Revision of 1662 certainly intended to confirm and continue, so that " be in use " as meaning " be in trust " was intended to be the true interpretation of the Section of the Act.

That the foregoing explanation of what took place in 1662 is the true one is proved by the following matter of simple fact.

7. **There is no trace** whatever that the Authorities of Church and State intended to make any alteration in the existing customs which had been uniform and universal since 1559. The Bishops, including those who had been the foremost Revisers in 1662, issued Visitation inquiries *after* the Act of 1662 had become law as to the surplice, i.e. of the vestment laid down in the Prayer Book of 1552. It will suffice to quote the inquiries of one of these Bishops, that of Bishop Cosin of Durham, himself one of the Revisers—

" Have you a large and decent surplice (one or more) for the minister to wear at all times of his public ministration in the Church ? "

" Have you a hood or tippet for the minister to wear over his surplice if he be a graduate ? "

" Doth he always at the reading or celebrating any Divine office in your church or chapel constantly wear the surplice and other his ecclesiastical habit according to his degree ? And doth he never omit it ? "

It should be borne in mind that, as with the earlier Visitation inquiries, this action was taken by those who were responsible for the revision of 1662, and for the carrying out of the Act of 1662. This is another of the vital and decisive facts of the situation.

8. From 1662 onwards for at least two hundred years **the uniform practice** of the Church was according to the Prayer Book of 1552. In 1689 Commissioners were appointed to revise the Prayer Book, and their view of the law can be seen by their own words. " Whereas the surplice is appointed to be used by all ministers in performing



Divine Offices." Thenceforward the practice continued uniform and consistent through the Church until the rise of the Tractarian Movement, when the question was raised, and an interpretation put upon the Ornaments Rubric which is opposed to everything known and observed in the Church of England for nearly three centuries. The words of the Rubric are certainly ambiguous, the circumstances of its insertion in 1559 are hardly known, and it was assuredly lacking in legal authority; but the practice of the Church since 1559 has been, to quote the words of the Ridsdale case, "uniform, open, continuous, and under authoritative sanction." No ambiguity of wording can be set against nearly three centuries of unequivocal, uniform, and universal usage.

9. It must be obvious to every careful student of the foregoing facts and of the general history of the Reformation in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth that it would have been **an utter impossibility** to prescribe vestments associated with Roman doctrine (as the chasuble and alb are) while ordering the Prayer Book (of 1552) which contained no teaching which could be expressed by such vestments. To interpret the Rubric as restoring the ceremonial of the Prayer Book of 1549 is to ignore and set aside entirely the drastic Revision of 1552, which expunged all mediaeval doctrines and ceremonial from the Prayer Book. And, as we have already seen, that Revision of 1552 was the basis of the Restored Prayer Book of 1559, and is still in all essential doctrines and practices our Prayer Book to-day.

To interpret the Rubric as referring to the Order of Holy Communion of 1548 would have still more astonishing results in the light of the subsequent stages of the Reformation and of the three centuries of English Church history since then. The Order of 1548 expressly prescribed that, with two exceptions, the ceremonial of the mediaeval Mass was to be continued. Is it at all conceivable that this can be the law of our Church to-day? To wear the chasuble and alb which are connected with the Mass, and yet to find within the covers of the same Prayer Book an Article which calls sacrifices of Mass "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits," would surely involve an incongruity that hardly needs to be mentioned. Yet this is the absurd and impossible position involved in the novel Tractarian interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric.

10. It should ever be remembered, moreover, that the Ornaments Rubric as it stands is **compulsory in form**. It *orders*, and does not simply *permit*. There is no idea of a maximum or minimum ritual,<sup>1</sup> as though in some Churches we might legally have the

<sup>1</sup> Except, of course, if the reference be to the Prayer Book of 1549, when there would be the alternatives of chasuble or cope.

sacerdotal vestments associated with the Mass, and in others the surplice only. One of the great principles of the Reformation was uniformity of usage and the entire cessation of various "uses" in different Churches and Dioceses. If, therefore, the modern interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric be correct, then the use of the surplice at Holy Communion is absolutely illegal, and has been since 1559. Then, too, the Bishops of 1560 and 1662 were entirely wrong when in their Visitations they insisted on the use of the surplice. To mention this is to show by contrast what the simple truth is.

II. **To conclude** : it will be seen from the above considerations that the question is one of historical fact rather than of verbal interpretation. If we are in doubt as to what is meant by a legal enactment, we must inquire what was *done* under that particular enactment. "Contemporary explanation is the most conclusive in law." Practice clears up ambiguities, and shows how an act was understood at the time. The testimony of the Royal Visitation in 1559, the Royal Advertisements of 1566, the Canon of 1604, and the Episcopal Visitations of 1662-3 show with unerring conclusiveness what was done in the Church from 1559 to 1662, and the custom and usage of three centuries only go to confirm the truth of the position.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

THE question of prayers for those who have departed this life was one of great prominence at the time of the Reformation, and it has obtained a good deal of attention of recent years. It is, therefore, a matter of real importance to discover what Holy Scripture and the Church of England teach on the subject.

At the time of the death of Archbishop Benson, the papers called special attention to a large violet pall that covered the bier, and on the pall in large letters an inscription had been worked, "*Requiescat in Pace.*" We wonder whether those who placed it there quite realized what was involved in the phrase. Did it imply that the Archbishop was *not* at peace? If this was so, was it not a reflection on his Christian character and service? For "*being justified by faith we have peace with God.*" The words thus at once raise a question that ought to be faced. What is the meaning of Prayers for the Dead?

### 1. The Meaning of Prayers for the Dead.

(a) Are they prayers for the unconverted dead? This is not the case in the Church of Rome. That Church holds as firmly as we do the finality of this life as an opportunity for accepting or rejecting Christ. Nor is it so, generally, in the case of Anglicans who pray for the dead. They, too, realize the force of the Appeal to "now" and "to-day" as the accepted and only time of salvation. Prayer for the dead could be understood if we believed in another probation; in another opportunity after this life, but this is not the teaching of the Romish Church or of the majority of the extreme Anglicans, though a number of "liberal" Anglicans do take this view.

(b) The prayers must, therefore, be for the Christian dead. This is the meaning of the practice in the Roman Church, and in the case of most of those in the Anglican Church who adopt the custom. They both pray for the converted dead and say, "May they rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine on them."

But why should we pray for the Christian dead? They are "with Christ" (Phil. i. 23) in conscious fellowship. They are "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). They are "with Him in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). They are blessed, for "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. xiv. 13). The New Testament outlook concerning the blessed dead is one of joy, peace, hope, and expectation; we are to remember their past life, imitate their faith, and praise God for them. It seems to be at once unnecessary and cruel to pray, "May they rest in peace," for it reflects on their present peace, joy and satisfaction in the immediate presence of Christ our Lord.

This leads at once to the heart of our subject—

### 2. The Foundation of Prayers for the Dead.

(a) Prayer must be based on God's Revelation. Prayer finds its warrant in Promise. We can only pray definitely or satisfactorily in so far as we have the Divine warrant for praying. This practice must therefore be based not on sentiment but on Scripture. Some one had been praying for her dead father on the ground of "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father," and the question was asked whether the "whatsoever" could include this. Attention was thereupon called to the qualification of the word "whatsoever" by the phrase, "In His Name." The "Name" means the revealed character and will of God, all that we know of Him, and this must of necessity be the limit of our prayers. And inasmuch as God has not revealed Himself on this matter it was urged that this text could not possibly be used to cover prayer for the dead. Prayer, therefore, must be based on Revelation.

(b) Revelation is clearly for this life. God's Word is almost silent as to the details of the future life, and absolutely silent as to any relation of prayer to that life. As to the unconverted, the present life is decisive and final in relation to opportunity, and as to the converted, while there is doubtless growth in the Kingdom of God in the state after death, as there must be to all eternity, yet not one syllable is to be found in God's Word to tell us that our prayers can either effect or affect that growth. Prayer for others is bounded by this life, and after this prayer is swallowed up in praise.

Prayer for the Dead is perfectly intelligible on the Roman Catholic theory of Purgatory. If souls pass from here imperfect and need purification for eternal glory it is easy to understand how, according to Roman principles, prayer can be made for them. But with the rejection of this idea of Purgatory, the practice of Prayers for the Dead falls to the ground. And those who associate Prayers for the Dead with the Communion of Saints are compelled to limit their prayers to the most general terms, and thereby entirely alter the idea of prayer from the definite petitions and intercessions which we use on earth. The only justification for Prayers for the Dead would be to pray for them as definitely and pointedly as when they were here. But this would be to deny the whole of the New Testament concerning their joy and blessedness in the presence of Christ.

The only passage in the New Testament that can be adduced as a possible warrant is 2 Tim. i. 18. It is urged that Onesiphorus was dead when St. Paul wrote. The elements of the interpretation of this passage are somewhat as follows—

(1) It is entirely uncertain whether Onesiphorus was alive or dead. No one can possibly decide one way or the other. This is not a very hopeful way of deriving an important doctrine from the passage.

(2) Even supposing Onesiphorus was dead, it would be possible to express a wish like this for a friend without in the least admitting the principles on which prayer for the dead can be taken seriously.

(3) The assumption that he was dead is entirely gratuitous. In 1 Cor. i. 16, and xvi. 15, compared with Rom. xvi., we can see that households can be referred to without the head of the house being dead.

(4) Then the view that Onesiphorus was dead probably runs foreign to the context. If we compare verse 15, we see that some had forsaken St. Paul, but that Onesiphorus had not been ashamed of the prisoner and his chain (verses 16–18); then Timothy is urged to the same boldness (cf. ii. 1, "therefore"). There is nothing here to warrant the idea of the death of Onesiphorus.



To build such a momentous practice on this text is surely to build a pyramid on its apex and not on its base, and architecture of this kind, whether material or moral, is likely to prove dangerous and disastrous.

From Scripture, therefore, the one Fount of essential truth, we have no warrant, no foundation for Prayers for the Dead, but everything that looks in the opposite direction. We have next to consider.

### 3. The Early History of Prayers for the Dead.

(a) It is generally thought that the Jews prayed for the dead, and that a passage in 2 Maccabees xii points in that direction. Some Jewish liturgies of the present day certainly have them. But it has been pointed out <sup>1</sup> that the passage in Maccabees does not necessarily involve Prayers for the Dead, nor is it at all certain that the present Jewish liturgies are of pre-Christian date. In any case, however, we have no record of our Lord and His Apostles observing such a custom, and it would be very precarious to base a Christian practice of such moment on merely Jewish grounds even if we were sure of them.

(b) In the Christian Church it is to be carefully noted that the earliest form of the phrase indicated by R.I.P. was not "requiescat," but "requiescit," which states the fact, "he rests in peace." The earliest inscriptions of the Catacombs, too, are "in pace," "in Christo," etc., without any prayer. All early history points to the remarkable joy associated with Christian funerals, the thought of the beloved one being with the Lord overshadowing all else.

When Prayers for the Dead actually began in the Christian Church they were very simple and marked by a true reserve, because of our ignorance. They were merely prayers for the soul's rest, and that it might be placed at God's Right Hand. But the mind of man is impatient of restraint and so something more definite was wanted to *pray* for. The order of thought and feeling seems to have been somewhat on this line, though of course not always definitely and consciously, nor all at once, but extending through several centuries. (1) Prayer implies need. (2) Need suggests imperfection. (3) Imperfection involves progress. (4) Progress indicates purification. (5) Purification demands suffering, and from this came the fully developed mediaeval doctrine of Purgatory which means purification based on the fact that the full penal consequences of sin are not all remitted in this life.

It is unnecessary to stay to controvert this in detail, but this much may be said: (1) We can readily see how far all this is from New Testament simplicity; and (2) Suffering is not necessarily

<sup>1</sup> *The Intermediate State*, by C. H. H. Wright, pp. 28-43.

remedial and purifying; it often hardens. Joy is on the whole quite as purgative as suffering, and, some would say, much more so.

This was the state of the case before the Reformation, and we are at once brought to

#### 4. The Teaching of the Church of England.

This calls for our most careful attention and study, and we have to note the following stages of the history.

(a) In 1549 came the first Reformed Prayer Book, and in it were prayers for the dead, distinct and definite. The Prayer now called the Prayer for the Church Militant was then headed "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church," and a petition for the departed included in the prayer. There were also prayers for the dead in the Burial Service.

(b) In 1552, came the second Reformed Prayer Book. From this prayers for the dead were deliberately omitted, and the words "militant here in earth" added to the heading of the prayer. The Burial Service was altered in accordance with this so as to express the present joy of the holy dead, "with whom souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity." One of the Homilies speaks in unmistakable plainness of the needlessness of prayers for the dead.<sup>1</sup> This was published within ten years of the Prayer Book of 1552.

(c) At the time of the revision of 1662 a proposal was made to omit the words "militant here in earth" but it was rejected, and there they stand to this day, a thanksgiving for the departed alone being added.

This is the Church of England history on the subject, clear and definite, and surely capable of only one meaning.

It is said, however, that there are two passages where we pray for the dead.

(1) In the Post-Communion Collect. "That we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of His passion." But surely the Church above has obtained "remission." It is almost impossible to be patient with an argument of this kind. It shows the sore straits to which those who use it are put. These words were the work of men who deliberately omitted Prayers for the Dead in 1552.

(2) "That with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom." But this is a statement about *them*, and a prayer for *ourselves*. It is in the prayer for the *Church Militant*, and that phrase covers the whole prayer. We thank God for the departed. We do not pray for them, for they do not need our prayer.

Such is the Church of England history and doctrine. And if it

<sup>1</sup> Seventh Homily, Second Book. On Prayer.

be said, as it has been sometimes, that Prayers for the Dead have never been forbidden in the Church of England, we reply that this is true in word but false in fact. What is the meaning of the changes made in 1552? Either they mean something or they do not. If they do not, or did not, why were they made? Indeed, we may ask what any of the Reformation changes meant? In the beginning of our Prayer Book we have, "Of Ceremonies, why some be Abolished, and some Retained." The prayer for the dead was one of those things that were abolished. Omission, therefore, clearly means prohibition. To say simply that a thing is "not forbidden" would justify almost anything that an individual clergyman might choose to adopt.

The question has naturally obtained renewed attention through the war, and certain statements of representative men compel a fresh consideration of the position of the Bible on the subject. Some who before the war had expressed themselves strongly in opposition to the practice have since modified their views, at least to the extent of permitting the private use of intercession for the departed. But the enquiry is at once raised whether these prayers are for the Christian or for the non-Christian dead. If for the Christian, what are we to ask on their behalf? The New Testament is, as we have seen, quite clear as to the absence of sin, sorrow, suffering, and temptation in the future life of the redeemed, and to pray for one who has passed away believing in Christ surely reflects on his position and satisfaction in the immediate presence of his Master. For this reason there does not seem any call for prayer, but only for that thankful commemoration of the departed, about which there is no question.

But another enquiry at once arises. Is it possible in such circumstances as those of war to limit our prayers to the faithful departed? Is there not an equally instinctive desire, indeed a greater longing, to pray for those of whose salvation we are not certain? But if so, we are at once faced with the solemn and serious idea of a second probation, "the Larger Hope," and again we are compelled to ask: Is this according to Scripture? If so, it is impossible to limit it to soldiers, for it must necessarily be extended to all who in any way yield their lives for a particular cause. And if a second probation is thought to be true, why not a third and a fourth and, indeed, many more, since there does not seem to be any valid reason for limiting the "chance" to a single opportunity.

It is essential to remember that Scripture, not feeling, is our guide and guard in all vital matters. We are not to imagine just what we wish and then regard that as necessarily right, for, if our

desires and Scripture should clash, one or other must give way. Surely Scripture is intended to correct and even transform our feelings and desires.

May we not also ask whether the war with all its strain and stress, great as they are, can really make such a change as is involved in praying for the departed? If the practice was wrong before, it must still be wrong, while if it is right now, it must have been right before. Such a revolution as is here implied cannot be justified even by the war. And, further, it cannot be limited to those who were killed in the war.

And so we conclude that the supreme requirement for this practice is authority, and as no man has returned from the grave to tell us anything of the future life, it is obvious that the one Authority available is that of God. We know that Scripture is silent, that the earliest Church is equally silent, and that only natural feeling and affection can be adduced for the practice. But this, as we have seen, is obviously insufficient in the face of ignorance of the conditions of the future life.

We must not fail to notice how the New Testament meets the supposed demand for Prayers for the Dead.

#### 5. The Safeguard against Prayers for the Dead.

(a) The New Testament generally is our best safeguard.

The burden there is on "now." The whole stress is on the *present*. We are to pray for others now, work for them now, endeavour to save them now. We intercede for them now because of their *need*. There is no revelation of need *then*, but just the opposite.

(b) The doctrine of Justification specifically is our perfect safeguard.

The root of Prayers for the Dead is failure to realize what Justification means. We are "accounted righteous before God" from the very moment we accept Christ. This Justification settles at once and for ever our position before God. Our spiritual standing is unchanged through life, and our title to Heaven is at once and for ever given. Justification is not repeated, it is permanent, and this settles the question of Heaven and God's presence once for all. We must ever remember that the Romish doctrine of Purgatory is not connected with Sanctification but with Justification. It is not part of a process for making Christians holier, but a supplementary process rendered necessary because all the penal consequences are not remitted in this life. Purgatory is required because the debt is not fully discharged here. But what saith the Scripture? "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom.



viii. 1). If only we teach, preach, live, and enjoy that blessed truth we shall never use Prayers for the Dead. We can now say with all our hearts and with full assurance—

“ Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress,  
’Midst flaming worlds in these array’d,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### CONCLUSION

ALTHOUGH we have been concerned in this part with matters of difference between Christian people, this book must not close with controversy. It is often a cause of deep sadness and sorrow to realize the differences between Christian men in the face of all the great needs of the world which is yet so largely without Christ, without God, without hope. The need is as imperative as it was in the days of old, for men who have “ understanding of the times ” and of what the Church of God ought to do. In this chapter we desire to call special attention to three great realities which are at the very foundation of Christianity and of all true life and Churchmanship. A careful consideration of these fundamental facts should go far to enable us to resolve our differences with our fellow-Christians, and to realize the purpose for which our Master sent the Church into the world.

**1. There is a Work to be done by us.**—Just before our Lord’s Ascension, He said to His disciples, “ Ye shall be My witnesses . . . to the uttermost part of the earth ” (Acts i. 8). How very partially and incompletely this work of witnessing to the world has been done is evident to all who know anything of the state of the world at the present time. At home there are millions of our fellow-countrymen outside the pale of every Church of whatever name. Probably 90 per cent. of the people attend no place of worship on Sundays. There are also unsolved problems of our social life crying out for solution by Christian men. Only as the great principles of the Christian religion are brought to bear upon them will they be healed.

In the Dominions Overseas the call to the Christian Church is loud and clear. The possibilities of Christian progress in Canada, Australia, Africa, and elsewhere are almost endless, and the twofold work of evangelization and edification waits to be done by loving and loyal hearts who are filled with earnestness and enthusiasm for God.

And what are we to say of the great world outside our own Empire, the vast heathen world with its millions yet unevangelized ? Some fields are not accessible ; others are accessible, but not yet occupied ; and yet again, there are other fields which are nominally occupied, but only in part. Our Master's call and command is clear : " Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature " (Mark xvi. 15).

This great duty of the evangelization of the world is the truest criterion of the spiritual life and power of the Church. It has been so in all ages. The Church has flourished in exact proportion to her missionary spirit, and declined as the spirit of evangelization has been lost or neglected. Whenever the Church has " lengthened her cords " she has thereby by a remarkable law of the spiritual world, " strengthened her stakes." This " forward movement " keeps the Church strong and pure, and enables her to see the true perspective and maintain the right proportion of things. The Christian Gospel is pre-eminently a message to pass on, to proclaim, to share, and in doing this we not only fulfil our Master's command, but we assure our faith and strengthen our own life in the realities of the Gospel.

In this great work it is the barest truth to say that the British Empire has one of the most splendid opportunities given to it by God, and as the greatest Church organization within the British Empire the Church of England has an almost unique opportunity. The true spirit and purpose of Empire will never be realized apart from Christianity, and only as the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour goes forward side by side with the extension and consolidation of the Empire can we for an instant expect to have the blessing of God upon our race. The following words of the Marquis of Salisbury (then Lord Cranborne), which were uttered at the Centenary Meeting of the Church Missionary Society in 1889, are still true to-day.

" It is only because we know that in the train of the British Government comes the preaching of the Church of Christ, that we are able to defend the Empire of which we are so proud. . . . I do not care in what quarter of the globe it may be, I do not care what may be the political exigencies of the moment, I do not care what colleges of secular instruction you may establish ; but unless, sooner or later, in due and proper time, you carry with those institutions the definite teaching of Christianity, you have done nothing at all." <sup>1</sup>

**2. There is a Power assured to us.**—In view of the overwhelming calls and responsibilities involved in what has now been said we are apt to become depressed and despairing as to the result. When we consider, moreover, what the Church of Christ ought to be, and how deeply she has failed in carrying out her Lord's com-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Stock's *Short Handbook of Missions*, p. 169.

mission, we are inclined to give up all hope until we remember that there is a power within the Church which is more than sufficient for all emergencies and possibilities. To us comes the word given to the people of old, "My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" (Hagg. ii. 5). In the Acts of the Apostles we are told not only of the work of witnessing to be done, but the Divine power with which it was to be accomplished. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (i. 8), and if only we are willing to receive and obey that Divine gracious power, we shall quickly see what results will accrue to our simple unquestioning faith and obedience. "I believe in the Holy Ghost" is our word of Confession in the public Services, and if these words express our real faith we shall find that the ability to do the will of God is assured to all His people. It has been calculated that there are at least ten million communicants in the various Churches of Christ, and if only one half of these were filled with the Spirit of Christ and became possessed with the thought of responsibility to their Master for the evangelization of the world, it would not be very long before the whole human race were made aware of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**3. There is a Hope to sustain us.**—Amid all the difficulties of modern life, the differences among Christian people, and the pressing problems awaiting solution, the one expectation of the Church is the Coming of the Lord. While we strain every nerve to evangelize the world in this generation, our eyes must ever be fixed on "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). This is at once the expectation, the inspiration, and the joy of the Church, and even this will be but the first stage in a series of great events which shall usher in the completion of the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of our Lord, the final triumph of good, and the fulfilment of God's eternal purposes for the world. With all these glorious certainties awaiting us in the future we must continue in prayer, in effort, in earnestness and holiness of life, "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," that great and glorious time when "the last enemy" shall have been destroyed, when Christ shall have put "all things under His feet," and when "God shall be all in all."

## APPENDIX

### A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list of books is suggested as likely to prove useful in the further study of particular questions discussed in the preceding pages. The list makes no claim to completeness and is offered primarily as a guide to students and younger readers. It is regretted that many of the books mentioned are out of print and only available second hand.

- BAILLIE, D. M. *God Was in Christ*. (Faber.)
- BALLEINE, G. R. *The Layman's History of the Church of England*. (C.B.R. Press.)
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- BARNES-LAWRENCE, A. E. *A Churchman and His Church*. (C.B.R. Press.)
- *The Holy Communion*. (C.B.R. Press.)
- *Infant Baptism*. (Marshall.)
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- *Our Faith*. (S.C.M. Press.)
- CARTER, C. S. *The English Church and the Reformation*. (Longmans.)
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- *Christian Doctrine*. (Hodder & Stoughton.)
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- *Jesus and the Gospel*. (Hodder & Stoughton.)
- DIMMOCK, N. *The Doctrine of the Sacraments*. (Longmans.)
- *The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*. (Longmans.)
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- FLEMINGTON, W. F. *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*. (S.P.C.K.)
- FORSYTH, P. T. *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*. (Independent Press.)
- *The Work of Christ*. (Independent Press.)
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- GILBERT, T. W. *Confirming and Being Confirmed*. (C.B.R. Press.)
- GORE, C. *Roman Catholic Claims*. (Longmans.)
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- HARRISON, D. E. W. *The Book of Common Prayer*. (Canterbury.)
- HERKLOTS, H. G. G. *These Denominations*. (S.C.M. Press.)
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- KERR, W. S. *A Handbook on the Papacy*. (Marshall, Morgan & Scott.)
- KNOX, E. A. *The Tractarian Movement, 1833-1845*. (Putnam.)
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- LIGHTFOOT, J. B. *The Christian Ministry* (Essay in Commentary on Philippians). (Macmillan.)
- LITTON, A. E. *An Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*.
- MACHEN, J. *The Christian Faith in the Modern World*. (Hodder & Stoughton.)
- MAXWELL, W. D. *An Outline of Christian Worship*. (O.U.P.)



- MEYRICK, F. *Scriptural and Catholic Truth and Worship.* (Skeffingtons.)
- MITCHELL, A. *This Service.* (C.B.R. Press.)
- MOULE, H. C. G. *Outlines of Christian Doctrine.* (Hodder & Stoughton.)
- MOULE, H. C. G.; DRURY, T. W.; GIRDLESTONE, R. B. *English Church Teaching.* (Longmans.)
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- *Into Thy Courts.* (C.B.R. Press.)
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